United Nations S/PV.5752

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5752nd meeting

Tuesday, 2 October 2007, 1.20 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

07-52572 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.20 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in October, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Maurice Ripert, Permanent Representative of France, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of September 2007. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Ripert for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council was briefed on 1 October on the recent attack on African Union peacekeepers in Haskanita, South Darfur, Sudan, reportedly committed by a rebel group. The Council condemns this murderous attack and demands that no effort be spared so that the perpetrators be identified and brought to justice.
>
> "The Security Council deplores the loss of life and injuries that resulted from this attack, and conveys its sympathy to the Governments, families and colleagues of those killed and injured.
>
> "The Security Council reiterates its support for the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and commends the dedication of its personnel and expresses its appreciation for those countries which contribute troops to AMIS.
>
> "The Security Council recalls the demand in resolution 1769 (2007) on all parties for an immediate cessation of hostilities and attacks on AMIS, civilians and humanitarian agencies. The Council insists that all parties in the Sudan comply with this demand and cooperate fully with the deployment of the United Nations Light and Heavy Support Packages to AMIS, and with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).
>
> "The Security Council deplores the fact that this attack took place on the eve of the peace talks starting on 27 October in Tripoli, under the chairmanship of the United Nations and the African Union. The Council underlines that any attempt to undermine the peace process is unacceptable."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2007/35.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5753

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5753rd meeting

Friday, 5 October 2007, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

Letter dated 3 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/590)

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07-52995 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

Letter dated 3 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/590)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Myanmar and Singapore, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Swe (Myanmar) and Mr. Menon (Singapore) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a request contained in a letter dated 3 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, under the symbol S/2007/590.

I welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: We meet at a time when events in Myanmar are attracting unprecedented world attention. My Special Adviser, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, just returned from a short mission yesterday and will brief the Council shortly. I asked Mr. Gambari to convey to the senior leadership in Myanmar very clear messages from me, on which Mr. Gambari will elaborate in his briefing.

I am deeply concerned about the recent events in Myanmar and the reports of continued human rights violations. I must reiterate that the use of force against peaceful demonstrators is abhorrent and unacceptable. While I am relieved to hear of reports that some military forces have been withdrawn and some restrictions eased, the overall situation remains of serious concern, especially with regard to the unknown predicament of the large number of individuals who were arrested without due process. I hope that those detained will be released without further delay.

Now more than ever before, the Government of Myanmar should take bold actions towards democratization and respect for human rights. The national reconciliation process must be accelerated and made as broad-based, inclusive and transparent as possible. A serious and comprehensive political dialogue between the Government and the political opposition is indispensable. One important outcome of my Special Adviser's mission is the announcement by the Government of a possible meeting between Senior General Than Shwe and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. I welcome that announcement and urge both parties to meet as soon as possible. It is too early to measure the impact of Mr. Gambari's visit or to label it a success or a failure. It appears, however, that a window of opportunity has opened, and it is vital that the Government of Myanmar respond positively.

Advancing the cause of democratization and the development of a peaceful and prosperous Myanmar will require the sustained engagement of the United Nations, with the active support of the international community, including especially the countries in the region. A united Security Council could play an important role in support of the ongoing efforts of the United Nations.

In that regard, I want to thank the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its members for their support for my initiative, as well as for their own interest and engagement in this issue. I trust that they will remain seized of the situation in Myanmar and actively engaged in finding a solution.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Gambari: Thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the outcome of my recent mission to Myanmar from 29 September to 2 October. Members of the Council are fully aware of the circumstances in which the Secretary-General decided to dispatch me to Myanmar, and I am grateful for the clear and strong support expressed by the Council for my mission.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to thank the Myanmar Government for having received me and for the cooperation extended to my delegation during our visit. Within the context of the good offices mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly, my mission had three main objectives: first, to assess the situation on the ground in the wake of recent demonstrations; secondly, to deliver clear messages from the Secretary-General to the Myanmar authorities at the highest level; and thirdly, to try to promote dialogue between the Government and the opposition as the best path to ending the present crisis and achieving national reconciliation.

Before addressing each of those objectives, however, I would like to express my gratitude to the Myanmar authorities for their flexibility in developing the programme of my visit as it evolved. As was the case during each of my previous visits to Myanmar, I was able to meet with both the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, Senior General Than Shwe, and with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. I also met with Acting Prime Minister Lieutenant General Thein Sein and other members of Government. Although, despite repeated requests, I was not able to meet with other relevant interlocutors — including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and representatives of the monks and 88 Generation Students — I did receive messages from many groups and individuals that have also informed my findings, including, of course, the close help I got from the United Nations country team.

The conditions in which my mission was undertaken and its duration were such that any assessment of the situation on the ground is necessarily limited. In my last two briefings, I updated members of the Council on the backdrop to the growing demonstrations since 19 August. The authorities initially exercised restraint in dealing with the protests — which was very much appreciated — but in the week preceding the mission tensions escalated through violent repression by the authorities against peaceful demonstrators. By the Government's own account, up to a dozen people — including a Japanese journalist — were killed, several dozens wounded, and over 2,000 arrested. Unconfirmed reports, however, put the number of casualties higher.

By the time my mission started, the protests on the streets of Yangon had been largely put down, and by the time the mission ended, the streets were busier and activity seemed to be returning to normal, although the situation remains tense. Of great concern to the United Nations and the international community are the continuing and disturbing reports of abuses being committed by security and non-uniformed elements, particularly at night during curfew, including raids on private homes, beatings, arbitrary arrests and disappearances. There are also continuing reports of mass relocation outside Yangon of monks arrested in the course of the demonstrations and monasteries that remain blockaded. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, who is with us at this meeting, and the Human Rights Council have issued strong appeals for independent verification of those reports and accountability for any human rights violations.

During the mission, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Yangon reported that at least two national United Nations staff members were arrested and detained. I brought that fact immediately to the attention of the authorities at the highest level, and the two staff members were subsequently released. A third national United Nations staff member and a dependent were also reported missing later, and both have also since been released. The United Nations Office in Yangon has received requests from people asking for a safe place to hide.

In my discussions with senior Governments officials, I was told that the demonstrations were instigated by a small minority of elements opposed to the Government and supported from outside; that the demonstrations were limited to Yangon and Mandalay, while the rest of the country had remained calm; that the authorities had indeed shown the utmost restraint in handling the situation; and that most of those arrested could be expected to be released shortly, after investigation and interrogation. My delegation was also taken to a mass rally in Lashio, in north-eastern Shan State, which was organized in support of the

Government's National Convention and seven-step political road map.

It is clear, however, that the demonstrations over the past few weeks have been, for the most part, an expression of deep and widespread discontent about socio-economic conditions in the country. General vulnerability in Myanmar is defined by accelerating impoverishment and the growing inability of the social service structures to address the basic needs of the general population. As an illustration, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assessment of household living conditions for the period 2004-2005 noted that one third of Myanmar's people lived below the poverty line and that 90 per cent of the people were spending less than $300 per year. At the time of the study, UNDP predicted that a 10 per cent rise in prices could push another one third of the country below the poverty line. Since then, the price of fuel has been increased twice, and significant levels of inflation have driven prices up considerably for basic food items and commodities. The overall poverty level is also indicated by the share of the household budget taken by food consumption, which on average is as high as 69 per cent.

Although the protests coincided with the Government's sudden decision on 19 August to sharply increase the price of fuel, the marches by monks across the country appear to have provided a catalyst for the demonstrations to become explicitly political in nature. That must be understood within the context of Myanmar's complex history since independence. What is clear is that since 1988 the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar have been denied by the Government in the name of stability and security. Although the Government succeeded after 14 years in completing the National Convention on 3 September, and although it assured me that the seven-step road map is broadly supported by the population, the exclusion of key stakeholders, such as the NLD, and the failure to meet the expectations of key participants, such as ethnic ceasefire groups, tends to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the process. In that context, the Government must open up and broaden the process that is to define Myanmar's future, and therefore meet the demands for greater inclusiveness, participation and transparency, in order to accelerate the transition to democracy and to civilian rule.

With regard to the second objective of my mission, I am pleased that, amidst the ongoing crisis, I was able to deliver clear and strong messages on behalf of the Secretary-General directly to the authorities at the highest level. My first message was to emphasize the changing domestic, regional and international context within which my mission was taking place, with the clear and strong support of Myanmar's neighbours, including China and Japan, countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Security Council. As I have said before, the world is not what it was 20 years ago, and no country can afford to act in isolation from the standards by which all members of the international community are held accountable. It is therefore essential for Myanmar's leadership to recognize that what happens inside Myanmar can have serious international repercussions.

My second message was to express the deep concern of the Secretary-General and the international community about the most recent events and to make specific recommendations for immediate steps to de-escalate tensions. Those recommendations include: putting an end to night raids and arrests during curfew; lifting the curfew as soon as possible; releasing all those arrested during the demonstrations; allowing access to clinics for those wounded during demonstrations; withdrawing military forces from the streets; ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law in the exercise of law enforcement, in accordance with international standards; allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross to have access to persons detained and to assist in tracing missing people; and putting an immediate end to raids on monasteries.

Thirdly, I emphasized the need to address without delay the political and socio-economic factors underlying the demonstrations through specific mid- and long-term measures, predicated on dialogue among all stakeholders. Any decrease in tensions can be sustained only if it is accompanied by positive steps to address the root causes of unrest. Specific recommendations have been put to the Government in that regard. The Council is already aware of the following key areas in which I have been encouraging the Government to make tangible progress: first, the release of all political prisoners, including those arrested in the course of recent demonstrations; secondly, the promotion of an all-inclusive national reconciliation process; thirdly, full cooperation with, and better access for, humanitarian organizations; fourthly, the cessation of hostilities in conflict areas,

including in Kayin State; and fifthly, continued cooperation with the International Labour Organization.

While it remains unclear how responsive the authorities will be to those messages, I believe that the mission helped develop understanding of the regional and international perceptions of the situation in Myanmar and of the urgent need for them to implement some of the specific ideas put to the authorities in order to meet domestic and international expectations. In terms of immediate steps, I would like to note that the authorities have already announced a relaxation of the curfew in Yangon and Mandalay. Reports indicate that the visible military presence in the streets has been reduced. I have also been informed by the Government that, as of today, a total of 2,095 persons arrested in the course of demonstrations have been released, including 728 monks, and that more releases will follow as a direct result of my request to the authorities on behalf of the Secretary-General. While those steps are welcome, further steps will need to be taken over the next few days and weeks, not only to overcome the current crisis but also to address the underlying factors of the recent unrest.

With regard to the third objective of my mission, namely, the promotion of dialogue, the visit allowed me to resume the role I started playing during my last visit, by conveying messages between the senior leadership and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The fact that I was allowed to meet with her a second time after meeting with the Senior General in itself suggests the usefulness of the United Nations good offices as a way for the parties to explore the possibility of engaging in early dialogue. I am therefore cautiously encouraged by the Government's announcement yesterday that Senior General Than Shwe is prepared to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, although with certain conditions. This is a potentially welcome development that calls for maximum flexibility on all sides. The sooner such a meeting takes place, the better, as it is a first and necessary step to overcome the high level of mistrust between them. I sincerely hope that the potential for dialogue will be recognized to the same extent by both sides, and that it can translate into concrete steps in the immediate wake of the crisis.

Another necessary step for genuine national dialogue to take place is the release of all political detainees, particularly the sick and the elderly. After all, only free men and women can engage in dialogue. The future of Myanmar belongs to all the people of Myanmar. It is therefore in the interest of the nation that all those who have a contribution to make should have the opportunity to do so. The issues for dialogue are known — from serious political and human rights concerns to pressing humanitarian and socio-economic issues — but only by working together as one people will Myanmar be able to address them and move forward as one nation.

In that connection, the specific recommendations that were put to the Government, including the possibility of establishing a broad-based constitutional review commission, are aimed at encouraging the Government to engage in a post-National Convention process of consultations that is all-inclusive, participatory and transparent. That would enable the credibility and legitimacy of the draft constitution to be submitted to a referendum. The United Nations has experience in facilitating such a constitutional review process.

In addition to the imperatives of the political dispensation, the Government needs to be more sensitive to the extremely fragile humanitarian and socio-economic context within which the recent demonstrations and crisis broke out. In that regard, the recommendation put to the Government to consider establishing a broad-based poverty alleviation commission to identify and address socio-economic needs will be a useful vehicle for promoting national dialogue on ways to improve the overall "health" of the country. The work of United Nations agencies in the country has been recognized as useful by the authorities. Every effort needs to be made to continue to find areas of mutual interest where progress can be made, including in the areas of health, education and drug reduction.

While the humanitarian and political action needs to continue to be coordinated, it is essential not to let humanitarian actions become hostage to political conditions, and vice versa. Any serious steps on the political front should be acknowledged by the international community through the provision of incentives in the humanitarian and socio-economic areas.

In conclusion, I would like to say the following. Amidst the tragic events of the past few weeks, this is an hour of historic opportunity for Myanmar. As I have said before, responsibility for the future of the country

ultimately rests with the Government and people of Myanmar. However, the world is watching closely how that responsibility will be exercised in the interest of all the people of Myanmar.

To delay the prospect of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Myanmar is to deny it to those who deserve it the most: the people of Myanmar. They have suffered too much for too long. At this point, what they need above all is hope, and I would be encouraged if this mission helped Myanmar's leaders to listen to their own people.

The Government also needs to know that the world needs a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Myanmar that can contribute to the development of the region and play a useful role in the international community. I want to reiterate here that, over the past two years, Myanmar has demonstrated greater openness and cooperation with the United Nations and the international community. Now is the time for Myanmar's leadership to make the bold choices that will demonstrate that these efforts have not been in vain and that Myanmar is ready to partner with the international community by making serious, tangible progress in the areas of concern to the international community. If it does so, it will find that there is much goodwill out there to help it along the way. Myanmar is part of a dynamic and prosperous region. As the ASEAN countries have already demonstrated, they recognize that they also have a responsibility to support Myanmar's efforts towards a peaceful and stable future.

Finally, as I have emphasized from the beginning, the Secretary-General's good offices are a process, not an event. It is important to recognize that one mission by itself cannot resolve the fundamental challenges facing Myanmar today. Advancing the causes of all-inclusive national reconciliation, democratization and full respect for human rights will require sustained engagement by the United Nations, including through the intensification of the Secretary-General's good offices, with the active support of Myanmar's neighbours, ASEAN countries and the international community, including a united Security Council.

The President: I thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing.

The floor is open for those Council members who wish to make statements.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): May I begin by thanking the Secretary-General and, in particular, his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, for their very full and informative reports that we have just heard.

The world has been both inspired and appalled by images from Burma in recent weeks. We have been inspired by the sight of people risking their very lives to make their voices heard for peaceful change and for democracy. And we have been appalled by the callous brutality of a regime willing to beat and kill peaceful demonstrators, including Buddhist monks, who are so revered in Burmese society — a regime that has carried out, and is continuing to carry out, mass arbitrary detentions across the country.

I was very concerned by the Special Envoy's comments about the continued human rights abuses being committed by the regime. It is essential that these come to an end.

Despite the censorship imposed by the regime, the entire world has witnessed these events on the ground in Burma. A sense of outrage and disgust at what has happened has spread around the world. The United Kingdom condemns once again today in the strongest terms the violence that continues to be perpetrated against the people of Burma.

The regime cannot turn the clock back. The world has seen the real desire of the Burmese people for change, and they have the support of my Government, and of many other Governments. The situation in Burma is not just an affront to the world; it is a threat to stability beyond Burma's borders. It is right that the United Nations and the Security Council should be involved. Despite the violence of recent weeks, the international community stands ready to help Burma achieve national reconciliation.

What needs to be done to bring about the change that is so clearly needed? First of all, we should set out common demands of the regime. These include the immediate end to the use of force against peaceful demonstrations, the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other detainees and political prisoners, and the start of a new and genuinely inclusive process of national reconciliation to allow Burma to transition to democracy.

We have heard recent statements from the regime, including one last night from General Than Shwe. The test for them is whether they are now prepared to work

with opposition leaders and with ethnic groups. They will be judged by results.

We believe that the Security Council should remain actively engaged. A presidential statement capturing the common concerns of the Council would be appropriate. Among other things, the Council should unanimously support the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy in continuing their efforts to set in train this inclusive dialogue leading to real democratic change in Burma. We thank them for their efforts so far. We believe that Mr. Gambari should return to Burma very soon to maintain the momentum. And we welcome the personal engagement and commitment of the Secretary-General.

Now is the time for all those with influence on the regime in Burma to play their part as well. We welcome the unequivocal message sent by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), who see themselves directly affected by the crisis in their region. We recognize and appreciate the helpful role played by China in supporting Mr. Gambari's visit. The authorities in Burma need to know that they have no support whatsoever in pursuing their present policies.

Burma is a country of vast natural resources and immense human talent. But for some 45 years, those resources have been squandered and those talents have been suppressed by a callous and misguided regime. The world stands ready to help rebuild Burma and see it integrated into the global community, where it belongs. The sooner that an inclusive reconciliation process takes place, the sooner this can be achieved.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for promptly dispatching his Special Envoy to Myanmar in response to the unfolding crisis. We particularly commend the efforts of Mr. Ibrahim Gambari to engage the leadership of Myanmar in addressing the complex challenges faced by the country. Naturally, we deeply appreciate his comprehensive briefing and look forward to further detailed deliberations on the points he has raised.

In anticipation of such discussion, allow me at this juncture to share some thoughts, as felt by my delegation. The decision by the Government of Myanmar to permit Mr. Gambari's visit is encouraging. Such a spirit must be constantly promoted. We urge the Government to recognize the visit of Special Envoy Gambari for what it was: a window of opportunity to engage the international community in the resolution of the various problems that have been left to fester for too long.

The situation in Myanmar was the focus of Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at an informal meeting in New York last week. On that occasion, Indonesia joined the rest of ASEAN in expressing concern, indeed revulsion, over the developments in Myanmar. We called upon Myanmar to desist from the use of force and to seek a political resolution. We urged the authorities to resume national reconciliation with all parties, working towards a peaceful transition to democracy, and to release all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The situation in Myanmar is at stark variance with the common path on which countries within ASEAN are currently embarking, namely, the vision of an ASEAN community, bound together by shared values that include democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are currently working on an ASEAN charter as the legal instrument of the organization, on the basis of those shared values.

In the exercise of constructing this democratic vision, Myanmar has not been an outside partner. On the contrary, it has been working together with the rest of the ASEAN members. That is what makes the recent developments in the country all the more difficult for the other ASEAN members. That is why we encourage the authorities in Myanmar not to see these values, or the clamour of their people for them, as an affront, or as a challenge to be combated.

The tragic events in the country have serious implications for the credibility and reputation of ASEAN. We cannot look the other way, because it is impossible to advance together if a member fails to honour the values espoused by the group. Since 2003, our engagement has involved encouraging Myanmar to make tangible progress in restoring democratic institutions and pursuing national reconciliation, in accordance with its own road map to democracy. We have committed ourselves to supporting Myanmar in moving forward on this path in a frank, candid and firm way. Unless seriously addressed, the recent crisis can only undermine any positive steps that may have been taken by Myanmar over recent years.

Moving forward, it is essential that the Security Council consistently support the Secretary-General's good offices, including through the promotion of a climate conducive to peacefully resolving the current situation.

Equally, it is important to acknowledge the importance of Human Rights Council resolution S-5/1, adopted by consensus on 2 October 2007, at the Council's fifth special session, on the human rights situation in Myanmar. We believe that the implementation of that resolution should complement and strengthen the good offices of the Secretary-General vis-à-vis Myanmar.

As to Myanmar itself, we again urge the Government to exercise restraint and urgently work to replace the climate of fear with the power of democratic persuasion and inclusive dialogue. Genuine inclusive dialogue should take advantage of the perspectives of all parties, united as one people and one nation. In this regard, we draw some modest hope from the latest reports of the offer by the leadership of Myanmar to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We hope that this is a first step towards national reconciliation.

My delegation believes that the recent events in the country should serve as strong impetus for real progress in the democratization process. As the Government and the people of Myanmar tackle the challenges of attaining those noble goals, Indonesia remains ready to continue to support that country bilaterally and within ASEAN.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our full support for the good offices of the Secretary-General in comprehensively engaging Myanmar, in a manner complementary to the efforts by ASEAN and other countries of the region.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement. I would also like to thank Mr. Gambari, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Myanmar, for his briefing and to congratulate him on attaining the expected objectives through his visit to Myanmar.

China is an immediate neighbour of Myanmar. The two countries share a border of over 2,000 kilometres, and the two peoples have lived as neighbours and have shared weal and woe since ancient times. Therefore, we are no less concerned about the situation in Myanmar than any other country. We sincerely hope to see a Myanmar with political stability, economic prosperity, social harmony and democratic progress.

Since late September, the situation in Myanmar has witnessed some disturbances which seriously disrupted the normal life of the people of Myanmar. The Chinese Government and leadership have followed the situation very closely and, on many occasions, called on all parties concerned to exercise restraint, restore stability through peaceful means as soon as possible, promote national reconciliation and achieve democratic progress.

China has also called on the Government of Myanmar to commit itself to improving the lives of its people, maintaining ethnic harmony and properly addressing related social issues. China encourages the Government to implement the seven-step road map promptly and to continue to make greater efforts on the democratization process. We believe that Myanmar's stability serves the fundamental and long-term interests of its people as well as the common interest of the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. On this very point, China shares the same position, perspective and expectations espoused by the rest of the international community.

China firmly supports the Secretary-General's good offices and has always believed that the United Nations could and should be able to play a constructive role in helping Myanmar. During his visit to Myanmar, Mr. Gambari had an in-depth exchange of views with Myanmar with the leaders of Myanmar on the current situation and also met people from various communities and circles. That is one good step. We are quite encouraged to see the results of this visit and view positively the efforts by Mr. Gambari and the Government of Myanmar.

Since the inception of the turbulence, China has made its due efforts to promote stability in Myanmar and has encouraged the Myanmar Government to continue its engagement with the international community. So far, Mr. Gambari's visit has achieved some initial results. He has listened to the views of different parties within the country and has also conveyed the concerns of the outside world. It should be noted that the purpose of the Secretary-General's good offices cannot be served through only one or two

missions. This will be a gradual process with incremental results. We encourage Mr. Gambari to continue his engagements with all parties in Myanmar, further build on mutual trust and facilitate candid dialogue.

We have learned that Myanmar has invited Mr. Gambari to visit the country again in mid-November this year. We sincerely hope that the Secretary-General's good offices will truly help Myanmar to achieve internal stability and national reconciliation and will provide constructive assistance to the country in addressing economic, social, humanitarian and human rights problems. Any actions by the Security Council should facilitate the good offices of the Secretary-General rather than interfering with them or even undermining the mutual trust already established.

We have noted that the situation in Myanmar is calming down thanks to the joint efforts of all parties in Myanmar and the international community. China hopes that the situation in Myanmar will continue to move in a positive direction. The current situation does not pose any threat to international or regional peace and security. The future of Myanmar lies in the hands of its people and its Government, and their problems will be addressed properly through consultations.

In our view, it is quite understandable for the outside world to express concern or expectations regarding the situation on the ground. However, pressure would not serve any purpose and would only lead to confrontation or even the loss of dialogue and cooperation between Myanmar and the international community, including the United Nations. Therefore, the Security Council should adopt a prudent and responsible approach in handling the issue of Myanmar. The international community can help the country achieve national reconciliation and democratic progress by offering constructive engagement and mediation. The key is to take the right approach.

Yet, if the situation in Myanmar takes a turn for the worse because of external intervention, it will be the people of the country who bear the brunt. That is the last thing that China, as well as other neighbours of Myanmar and other regional countries, wish to see.

We look forward to continued constructive engagement and cooperation between the international community and the Myanmar Government, which, we hope, will help the country move in a positive direction. China supports the positive role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on this question and will continue to work with the international community for a proper settlement of the Myanmar issue.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, for their very thorough briefings.

Unfortunately, what we have just heard about the situation in Burma and the attitude of the authorities of that country only confirms our fears. On 26 September, the Security Council met and urged the Burmese Government to show restraint. The Burmese authorities did not heed that urgent call. To the contrary, 10 days ago a leaden weight descended on Burma.

It is impossible to know the toll of these tragic days, because the junta is trying to conceal its bloody repression from the world. But one thing is for certain: the brutal repression led by the army and the police has already cost too many lives. France forcefully condemns this violence against peaceful demonstrators. This is why, along with its partners in the European Union, France has decided to strengthen the targeted sanctions against the Burmese leadership. The repression is less visible now, but it continues day after day. Thousands of people are being arrested outside any legal framework. The population is living in fear of raids that are being conducted mostly at night by the police. Among those who have literally disappeared are many monks. Corroborating evidence attests to temples devoid of any human presence within and around the capital.

France expresses its extreme concern about the fate of these many prisoners and disappeared persons. The Burmese leaders must know that they will be held responsible for the fate of these persons.

In that tragic context, France reiterates its urgent appeal to the authorities to immediately release persons who have been incarcerated for having peacefully exercised their right to freedom of expression and of assembly. We urgently request that the International Committee of the Red Cross be immediately authorized to gain access to Burmese prisons. Furthermore, we demand once again the unconditional release of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and of all prisoners of conscience imprisoned before the recent events. Finally, we reaffirm the importance that we attach to

the swift arrival of Mr. Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma.

At this tragic time, the Burmese people can be assured of the support of the international community. France wishes to welcome the very firm position taken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in that regard. Over and above that, the unity and resolve of the international community were powerfully demonstrated by the Human Rights Council's unanimous adoption of a resolution in keeping with the gravity of the situation in Burma.

In that context, the Security Council, which acts on behalf of the international community, cannot just remain silent. Its duty is to express — to use the terms employed by the ASEAN presidency — universal revulsion at the attitude of the Burmese generals and to make them understand that they will not be able to stay in power through a reign of terror and arbitrary action.

But we will be shirking our responsibilities if we do no more than condemn. We must go further and send a message of hope to the Burmese people by helping the Secretary-General to set out prospects for the future: true national reconciliation and a transition towards democracy. It is in that spirit that we reaffirm our full support for the good-offices mission led by Mr. Gambari, to whom we once again express our gratitude for his resolute actions, which augur well for the future. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General has been able to establish relations of trust with all the Burmese parties. We hope that, on the basis of this initial outcome and the ideas that he has just described, he will soon be able to make concrete proposals with a view to launching, with United Nations support, a genuine process of dialogue that brings together the authorities and the representatives of the opposition and of minority groups. To that end, we believe that he must be able to return to Burma as soon as possible.

We have noted that the head of the junta is prepared to begin a direct dialogue with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. However, that very belated statement once again sets out conditions for a resumption of dialogue. We hope that it is not just another delaying tactic. Of course, we leave the decision up to Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and her party as to whether or not to respond to this proposal.

On the other hand, if the Burmese authorities continue to refuse to consider any serious and sincere dialogue with the opposition or set unacceptable conditions for its resumption, and persist in their tactics of repression, terror and human rights violations, the Special Envoy must make that known and the Security Council must draw all the necessary conclusions.

Finally, my delegation wishes to emphasize the great importance that it attaches to the collective nature of our effort. We all share the same concern; we all hope for real progress towards dialogue and democracy; we all support Mr. Gambari's activities. The countries of the region, the countries of ASEAN and China play an essential role, and France pays tribute to them. It is important that the Council support and strengthen this collective approach and that we send clear messages to the Burmese authorities.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to welcome the presence of the Secretary-General. That presence illustrates the gravity of the situation that we are discussing today and of which the Security Council is quite rightly seized. I should also like to thank Professor Gambari for his briefing on his mission to Burma at a most critical time. Today's meeting is an opportunity to stress the Council's full support for his good-offices efforts.

The size of the demonstrations in Burma has shown the degree to which the absence of dialogue has proved untenable over the long term. Indeed, the movement of monks and of the population, which we have witnessed since 19 August, has been unique in terms of its scale and its extent throughout the country. My delegation condemns the brutal repression of those non-violent demonstrations. Moreover, Belgium is particularly concerned at the many arrests that have occurred in recent weeks and strongly urges the Government of Myanmar to release persons who have done nothing more than exercise their fundamental right to freedom of expression and of assembly.

The Council is no doubt aware of the European Union's decision to extend the targeted sanctions regime, following the grave events witnessed by the international community. Belgium supports those sanctions and wishes to make it clear that repression of fundamental rights can in no way be tolerated. Moreover, we hope that progress in democratization and in respect for human rights will enable us to reverse the course of events.

In that context, the role of the countries in the region, particularly the neighbouring countries, is

essential. Belgium welcomes the 27 September statement made by the presidency of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose presence in the Council today we welcome.

My delegation will listen closely to the statement to be made by the representative of Burma. In view of recent developments, Belgium's expectations can be summarized as follows: first, immediately launch an inclusive political dialogue; secondly, open the way for real democratization, with total respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and, finally, immediately and unconditionally release those arrested during the recent repression as well as all political prisoners, primarily Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We thank the Secretary-General for his statement. We also thank Professor Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on his recent visit to Myanmar.

South Africa supported the decision by the Secretary-General to send Professor Gambari, his Special Envoy, to Myanmar, acting in the context of his good offices. We also welcomed the decision by the Government of Myanmar to receive the Special Envoy, and particularly to permit his visit to Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. We applaud Professor Gambari for his tireless efforts since assuming his role as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and particularly his efforts aimed at addressing the current developments in Myanmar.

The South African Government has expressed its deep concern at the recent violence and excessive use of force in Myanmar that led to the loss of life. South Africa is of the view that the long-term solution to the current challenges facing Myanmar lies in a negotiated, inclusive and peaceful political solution through dialogue between the Government and all political actors. We call on the authorities in Myanmar to exercise restraint and to refrain from further acts that may exacerbate the current situation.

We welcome the expeditious and concerted manner in which the Human Rights Council acted in response to the situation. We urge the entire international community, in particular the Security Council, to rally behind the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy as they continue with their endeavours.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I would like to thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing and observations on his recent visit to Burma. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and to express our strong support for his continued good offices and efforts towards promoting democracy and reconciliation in Burma. We encourage him to remain vigorously engaged in that process and the Government of Burma to use that assistance and window of opportunity, as the Secretary-General put it, to take bold action towards democratic change in the country.

Slovakia is concerned about the deterioration of the situation in Burma. We condemn the violent and repressive action of the military leaders in Myanmar against the peaceful civil demonstrations which began last month in response to the escalating tensions, human rights violations and the deteriorating humanitarian and social situation in that country. We are shocked and dismayed by the reports of death and serious injuries among the protesters and are deeply concerned about the fate of hundreds of activists and ordinary people who have been detained or are missing.

Slovakia calls on the authorities of Burma to immediately cease all hostilities and human rights abuses against its own citizens, to free the arrested demonstrators and all prisoners of conscience, including the democracy leader and Nobel Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, and to commence a broad-based and all-inclusive process of political transformation and national reconciliation while respecting the multi-ethnic and multireligious nature of its society.

Burma has an appalling human rights record that includes the use of child soldiers and forced labour, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. For decades the military regime has waged a war against ethnic groups in which its security forces have razed villages, raped women and killed civilians, causing hundreds of thousands of people from Burma to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. We fear that if the violence and gross human rights violations continue, the situation in Burma might turn into a major and dangerous intra-State conflict with dire and unpredictable consequences for the whole region.

In that regard we reaffirm our call to the Government of Burma to cooperate fully with the United Nations, to address the political and humanitarian situation in the country and to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-

General, as presented by Mr. Gambari, and the provisions of the road map of transition to democracy.

We strongly support the role and efforts of the regional partners in helping to find ways for Burma to respond to the situation and achieve a sustainable, peaceful, democratic and political solution to the crisis. While reiterating our full support for the role and good offices of the Secretary-General and his envoy Mr. Gambari, we believe that the Security Council must also take appropriate steps to tackle the situation by considering a strategy that might help to facilitate national reconciliation and a genuine transition to democracy in Burma.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): The United States welcomes the Secretary-General's participation in today's meeting. We want to thank him for dispatching his Special Adviser to Burma and for working very hard — as I know he did — to make sure that he was admitted to Burma. Those steps demonstrate, Sir, your commitment to helping the Burmese people during this critical time.

We appreciate Special Adviser Gambari's report on his most recent visit to Burma and commend his efforts. We support his mission and have confidence in his diplomacy.

Terrible things have happened in Burma over the past few weeks. The United States is appalled by the brutal repression that has been carried out by the Burmese regime against its own people. The beatings, mass detentions, torture and even murder of citizens — children, women, students, monks and nuns — and even murder simply for participation in peaceful demonstrations are unacceptable. And they should be unacceptable to Powers with influence over Burma, to regional States and, indeed, to all of us in this Chamber.

Despite the Burmese regime's attempt to block news of the recent disturbing events from reaching the rest of the world by shutting off access to the Internet, courageous Burmese citizens made sure we saw the truth of what was happening on the ground. The images were gripping — photographs of the death of a Japanese journalist shot down by Burmese security forces and images of the lifeless body, floating in a river, of a monk who had been executed.

In considering those events, I wish to quote the words of Nay Tin Myint, a Burmese exile who underwent dreadful forms of torture during 15 years in a Burmese prison, which he called "the closest thing to hell". In a recent opinion piece he reminded us that the world was not watching in 1988 when thousands were killed by the guns of the regime. It is watching now. The people of Burma must not be let down.

Because the brutal repression by the regime is now occurring far from cameras and public view, it is difficult to verify the facts on the ground. Only yesterday, the regime admitted that it had arrested over 2,000 demonstrators and claimed that it had released 692 persons. The regime even arrested several United Nations staff members during the sweep of houses and apartments in the area where major protests have occurred. Fortunately, they were released. But there are many who are still in jail, rounded up by the Burmese regime in raids in the middle of the night. Given past practice, we fear that they are being kept in unimaginably inhumane conditions and denied access to international humanitarian organizations.

The impact of the violent repression is clearly felt throughout the region, and the region itself is faced with an exodus of refugees from Burma, the spread of controllable infectious diseases and the trafficking of narcotics and people — all closely tied to the political crisis in that country.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers made the point, and we agree, that the events in Burma undermine the reputation and credibility of that important regional organization. We welcomed the statement on 27 September by the Chair of ASEAN, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he expressed the revulsion of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers over the actions of the Burmese security forces and urged a peaceful transition to a democratic Government. Others are also speaking out, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs of India, the Prime Minister of Singapore, the European Union ambassadors — all those voices are indicative of an emerging regional, indeed international, consensus that the repression carried out by the Burmese regime against its own people is both indefensible and intolerable.

I also wish to recognize the role of China in using its special influence to persuade the regime to receive Special Adviser Gambari. We look forward to the continued support of China for the Secretary-General's

Special Adviser in order to gain tangible results from its good offices mission.

What next? We have heard today Special Adviser Gambari's assessment of his recent visit and an accounting of the "to do" list he provided to the regime. I must convey to you, however, our deep regret that the Burmese authorities did not fully cooperate with him during his visit. It is of particular concern that they limited his access to key people and places, including the leaders of the 88 Generation student group and monks and monasteries that participated in peaceful demonstrations. Moreover, the United States was greatly disturbed to see the regime resume the unlawful detention of citizens, just hours after his departure.

Nevertheless, Mr. Gambari's mission may have succeeded in cracking open the door. It is still too early to evaluate it, but we take note of the offer of General Than Shwe to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. At the same time, we deeply regret that that offer included unrealistic conditions. In our view, the regime must move beyond gestures and take concrete steps that respond to the concerns of the Burmese people and the international community.

What does the Burmese regime need to do? The United States calls on the Burmese regime to implement the following measures: First, it must immediately end the violent crackdown, including an end to the raids, lifting of the curfew and the removal of the military presence around monasteries and on the streets of Burmese cities. Secondly, it must immediately release citizens detained for the participation in the recent demonstrations. This will be a critical step in de-escalating the current situation. Thirdly, it must release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. This overdue step is essential in order to begin a genuine and inclusive dialogue with all actors of Burmese society, so as to begin the transition to a civilian representative government. And fourthly, it must restore public communication links, such as telephone lines and Internet connections, within Burma and between Burma and the rest of the world.

What can the world do to incentivize the Burmese regime to take these necessary measures? This is an issue for the entire international community. The United States has done its part to back up its words with actions that will serve to ratchet up pressure on the regime. Last week, the Department of the Treasury blocked the assets of 14 senior regime officials, and the Department of State identified senior regime officials and their immediate family members — over 200 individuals — as subject to a ban on entry into the United States. We are now exploring follow-up measures targeting the regime and those who provide financial support to it.

The Security Council must not remain silent just because the people of Burma have been silenced by the violent repression carried out by the regime. We have an opportunity to be their voice, and we must.

At the moment, Special Adviser Gambari is the link between the international community and the regime. It is therefore vital to maintain the momentum begun by his recent visit in order to obtain concrete results from his good offices mission. We urge Mr. Gambari to return to the region as soon as possible to continue his intensive diplomatic efforts, and we call on all Governments with influence with the regime to support his return and his mission. We expect that upon his return he will receive full cooperation.

Burma's neighbours have a special role and responsibility. We also urge ASEAN and its member States to build on their efforts to increase pressure on the Burmese regime.

What if the Burmese Government does not take appropriate steps? If the Burmese regime does not respond constructively to the demands of the international community in a timely manner, the United States is prepared to introduce a draft resolution in the Security Council imposing sanctions. We must all be prepared to consider measures, such as arms embargos, to incentivize the regime to cooperate with Mr. Gambari.

In conclusion, it is time for the Council to do more than simply listen to a briefing. Like the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, the United States also believes that the Council must speak out in a presidential statement to support the Secretary-General's efforts to establish a genuine political dialogue between the regime and all parties, to condemn the deplorable repression of peaceful demonstrators and to call on the Burmese regime to release detainees and political prisoners, so that they can participate in a dialogue leading to national reconciliation.

The eyes of the world are focused on Burma. The people of that nation are going through a difficult time. Like people everywhere, they deserve to live in peace, prosperity and freedom. The United Nations should stand with them and assist in bringing about a political transition from dictatorship and repression to reconciliation and democracy.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his statement. Allow me also to thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his important briefing to the Security Council on his recent visit to Myanmar. My delegation strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, and particularly through his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, and we hope that those efforts will meet with success.

My delegation condemns acts of repression that prevent the spread of freedom in all parts of the world. These have many manifestations and forms. We regret the most recent events in Myanmar and hope that the situation will return to normal. We call for stability, achieved through peaceful means, as soon as possible in the service of the national interests of Myanmar.

In our view, the issue of Myanmar must be addressed in a highly professional manner, without selectivity or discrimination. We must understand that what is needed here is to find solutions, without resorting to confrontation with Myanmar.

It must be recalled that some principal and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations continue to consider the situation in Myanmar. On 2 October 2007 the Human Rights Council adopted its resolution S-5/1, on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. We would therefore prefer that the Security Council's approach to this issue be based on close coordination with those bodies. My delegation would also like to stress that the ideal way for the Security Council to deal with this issue would be to support the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, as well as those of regional organizations and neighbouring countries, in finding a solution to the situation in Myanmar, and to avoid attempting to interfere in the situation in any way.

Finally, we call on the Government of Myanmar to investigate the recent violations and to bring the perpetrators to justice. We call on that Government to resolve internal issues before it is too late. We strongly call on the authorities in Myanmar to cooperate with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to fully assist him and to show greater flexibility, with a view to achieving prosperity for the people of Myanmar.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): First of all, I express my strongest appreciation to the Secretary-General and to his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, for their strenuous efforts on behalf of all of us. I cannot appreciate enough the special efforts of the Special Adviser, Mr. Gambari, because the messages that he has delivered to the Myanmar authorities and the objectives of his mission as he has described them are messages and objectives that I think all of us around this table share. Most important of all, I would say that they are shared by the membership at large.

His briefing today confirms that, through his mission, he has been able to achieve the maximum possible under the current circumstances, in 48 hours and notwithstanding all the limitations imposed on him. It is a fact that, as the Secretary-General has said, a window of opportunity is now open and I make an appeal to the authorities of Myanmar not to close it.

I am looking forward to what my colleague from Myanmar will say to show that we are on the right track. We are convinced that the unanimous support lent by this Council and by the entire international community was instrumental in the access to political actors granted to Mr. Gambari during his mission. Once again, cohesion, unity of vision and common purpose have proven to be powerful driving forces. The United Nations has reaffirmed its unique role as the trusted and legitimate highest body of international governance. Today I am glad to see the Secretary-General here with us, further reinforcing this message, and I thank him.

I will carefully report, of course, to my Government on the content of Mr. Gambari's briefing, which has shadows and light. It was eagerly awaited by the entire international community and will certainly be studied in Rome with the greatest attention, in line with the central priorities that our Government, Parliament, civil society and public opinion attach to the call of the people of Myanmar for peace, democracy and freedom.

Unfortunately, since Mr. Gambari's departure from the country, we have continued to receive very disturbing reports of repression. The suspension of demonstrations has not been achieved through dialogue

and reconciliation, but rather through a ruthless crackdown and intimidation that we strongly deplore and condemn.

Three days ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed, before the Human Rights Council, her concern for the safety and well-being of the monks and for the thousands of people arrested in the course and aftermath of the peaceful demonstrations. We fully share her concerns and join her call on the Myanmar authorities to give a full account of their actions, including precise and verifiable information on the number of people killed and injured and on the whereabouts and condition of those who were arrested. Humanitarian organizations should be given full access to detainees. A democratic transition, to be achieved through an inclusive political dialogue, remains the only viable recipe for peace and development in Myanmar.

That is gradually being recognized by the entire international community, along with the need for an immediate release of all political prisoners and the recognition of the vital role to be played by the United Nations in this regard. The consensual resolution adopted three days ago by the Human Rights Council testifies that the peaceful voice of the demonstrators in Myanmar has been heard and is mobilizing the attention of the community of nations as a whole. As has already been said by others, this Council cannot remain silent.

We are convinced that the latest events make it increasingly difficult to argue against the competence of this body to address the situation in Myanmar. Our firm belief is nurtured by the strong statements we have heard in the past several days from the countries of the region and in particular from the ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the main subregional organization. We must continue to engage at the highest level with key players, notably in the region. Our special thanks goes to China for the constructive role that it has played and, I am sure, will play, and its influence. We are convinced that they hold a special responsibility to promote a peaceful and democratic solution to the current situation.

At the same time, the Security Council should continue to be informed on a regular basis about the developments on the ground and the progress in the implementation of the Secretary-General's good offices mandate. The message that must come from this body — not necessarily, of course, from this meeting, but certainly in the coming days — must be a strong message of strong support to the Secretary-General, so that we will strengthen the hand of Mr. Gambari, his Special Envoy, in future initiatives. That is to say, we must strengthen his hand in the implementation of the messages that he has delivered on behalf of all of us and in reaching the objectives of his mission. We must strengthen his hand. I think that is what is at stake, and I heard all those who took the floor before me highlighting that point.

We are convinced that the Council's role will be essential in achieving our common goals in the country and beyond, namely reconciliation, stability, freedom and democracy. I hereby reiterate the position expressed by the ministers of the European Union on the need for the Security Council to consider further steps. On its part, the European Union has already decided to toughen its sanctions against the regime in Myanmar, while providing increased humanitarian assistance to the country.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to join Panama's voice to those of the other Member States that have thanked the Secretary-General for his participation, and Mr. Gambari for his effort in handling the sensitive situation in which Myanmar finds itself.

I would also like to recognize the manner in which today's debate is being held. I think the fact that we are having an open meeting, with the participation of Myanmar and of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), promotes transparency in the actions of the Security Council. I am sorry that we have not been able to find a suitable mechanism through which to hear the voice of the Human Rights Council or the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose participation on this topic is indispensable.

I must also express my regret at the fact that we have not yet heard the representatives of either Myanmar or ASEAN, before the members of the Council expressed their views. I think it would have been preferable to listen to them first, before speaking ourselves.

Everything indicates that there is clarity and understanding as to the facts in Myanmar and the goals to be attained: protecting human rights, the release of the prisoners, the need for a national understanding

free from external interference. All of those goals seem very clear. What is being discussed is how to achieve those goals. In Panama's view, those are objectives that we should try to attain through a unified effort by this Organization, and not through separate initiatives of its various entities and organs.

In this context, the delegation of Panama welcomes the statements that have been made by ASEAN and welcomes in particular the support for the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council. We feel that any gesture by this Council should be undertaken in a manner consonant with those previous declarations.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Secretary-General. We are grateful to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, for his comprehensive briefing on the outcome of his important and useful visit to Myanmar. Russia has consistently supported the good offices mission of the Secretary-General, and we hope that the efforts of Mr. Gambari will lead to positive results and that they will help Myanmar's advancement along the path of democratic development and constructive cooperation with the United Nations and the international community.

We repeatedly voiced serious concern at the situation in Myanmar during the days of its recent dramatic flare-up, when, unfortunately, there were human casualties involved. We call upon the authorities of the country and on the opposition forces and those involved in protest actions to show restraint to prevent the destabilization of the situation and further manifestations of violence. We drew attention to the information that the Myanmar leadership has shown willingness to cooperate with the international community, including, once again, to receive Mr. Gambari again, and also to engage in contacts with Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the opposition. It is important that that approach be acted upon in practice.

The Russian delegation took an active part in the adoption of the resolution of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. The main point, we think, is to encourage that country to consistently implement the proclaimed programme of democratic reforms. We pin great hopes on members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other States of the region to continue further efforts to promote a normalization of the situation in Myanmar.

With regard to the Security Council, its job is to continue lending political support to the efforts of Mr. Gambari, who received an appropriate mandate from the General Assembly.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari for his extensive and clear information about his recent visit to Myanmar. He has brought us credible testimony about the painful situation suffered by the people of Myanmar. Peru is concerned by the violation of human rights and the worrisome information about the humanitarian crisis that Myanmar is going through.

This situation has worsened over the past year, as the military authorities have intensified repression against the political opposition and ethnic minorities, which has led to the displacement of hundreds of people within and outside the country. We join in the general rejection by the international community of the repression witnessed over the past few days against peaceful demonstrators. Also, the restrictions on fundamental freedoms, unjustified detention, cases of torture and other forms of maltreatment — all of these are unacceptable. We reject the arbitrary detention of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and of other political leaders, despite repeated appeals from the international community.

This week, the Human Rights Council in Geneva has acted in accordance with its main responsibility, namely to respond when there are victims. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Peru actively promoted the adoption of the resolution.

Further, the increase in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees is creating a serious situation of instability, which threatens security in the region. In that context, Peru would like to highlight the urgent need to promote cooperation and dialogue as a way of seeking political solutions designed to bring about a democratic transition and genuine national reconciliation. In this task, the participation and cooperation of the neighbouring countries surround Myanmar is very important, as well as that of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the international community as a whole.

In conclusion, Peru would like to express support for the continued good offices mission undertaken by the Secretary-General through his Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari, leading to a dialogue between the Government and leaders of Myanmar.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

My delegation is also grateful to the Secretary-General for his statement. I also wish to reiterate Ghana's confidence in his good offices in Myanmar. We strongly support his positive interventions in the situation in that country, both directly and through the Special Envoy, Mr. Gambari. Let me also express our thanks for the briefing provided by Mr. Gambari on his latest mission to Myanmar, which elicited intense interest around the globe — and rightly so — because the situation in Myanmar is a matter of concern to us all.

Given the circumstances in which the visit was undertaken, we think that Mr. Gambari deserves commendation for engaging with both the authorities of Myanmar and their opponents, as well as with regional leaders, particularly of countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). That underscores the continuing importance of the role of the Special Envoy as a vital link, not only between the Government and the people of Myanmar, but also with the international community at large.

We believe that recent events in the country have introduced a new dynamic in the political situation and we are convinced that the long-term peace and stability of the country depends on the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Myanmar for democracy and for a better quality of life. The contribution of the Special Envoy in that regard is of utmost importance.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Council. I shall now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Security Council in connection with Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari's visit to Myanmar under the Secretary-General's good offices role mandated by the General Assembly. I wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his statement. I am also gratified to learn that Mr. Gambari, after reporting to the Secretary-General, has briefed the President of the General Assembly earlier today.

Mention was made of a statement to be made today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). I also understand that my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, will also be making a statement. Yesterday, when I contacted him, he was kind enough to clarify to me that his statement will not be on behalf of ASEAN.

At the meeting of the 10 permanent representatives from ASEAN countries just before the present meeting, the Permanent Representative of Singapore was kind enough to share his statement with us. Six permanent representatives, including Myanmar, made known their views to Singapore, the recurring chair of ASEAN, that they regard the statement in question as a national statement by Singapore. The statement is indeed forward-looking, but there are some elements with which we have some difficulty, particularly with regard to the reference to sanctions.

In the life of every nation, there are times when it has to face challenging situations and overcome them. Myanmar went through that experience very recently. In fact, what Myanmar went through was indeed a daunting challenge. However, we have been able to restore stability. The situation has now returned to normalcy. Currently, people all over the country are holding peaceful rallies within the bounds of the law to welcome the successful conclusion of the national convention, which has laid down the fundamental principles for a new constitution, and to demonstrate their aversion to recent provocative demonstrations.

Let me now turn to Special Envoy Gambari's visit to Myanmar. In that connection, I wish to deeply thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing.

We had already agreed for Mr. Gambari to visit Myanmar in November. However, after Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with my Foreign Minister on 26 September and expressed his desire to dispatch Ambassador Gambari to Myanmar at an early date, the Government of the Union of Myanmar invited Ambassador Gambari to visit Myanmar commencing 29 September.

Ambassador Gambari was accorded access and full cooperation by the Myanmar Government during his visit. He was received by Senior General Than Shwe, the Chairman of the State Peace and

Development Council. He also had the opportunity to hold separate meetings with the Acting Prime Minister and Government spokespersons, led by the Minister for Information. In addition, he met twice with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Ambassador Gambari travelled to northern Shan State and was able to witness the prevalence of peace and stability even in those far-flung areas. He witnessed a rally in support of the successful conclusion of the National Convention by some 120,000 people in Lashio. He also had occasion to meet with the leaders of an armed group that had returned to the legal fold and that had participated in the National Convention.

Prior to the visit of Ambassador Gambari, maximalist positions were articulated by a number of countries that Ambassador Gambari must meet our Head of State and that Ambassador Gambari must also meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Ambassador Gambari has accomplished even more than what was expected from his visit. Following the visit, Ambassador Gambari passed through Singapore and called on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his capacity as Chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee. Subsequent to the meeting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore issued a press release which mentioned that Prime Minister Lee "was encouraged by the access and cooperation given by Myanmar Government to Mr. Gambari".

In view of the improved situation of peace and stability in the entire country, and in particular in Yangon and Mandalay, the curfew hours imposed in those two cities have been shortened. The authorities initially detained a number of people for questioning. Those who had not infringed any serious laws were later released. To date — as mentioned by Ambassador Gambari — a total of 2,095 people, including 722 monks, have been released. Those who were released also include the remaining locally recruited employee of the United Nations Development Programme and her family. More releases will follow.

On the political front, Myanmar will continue with its policy of national reconciliation. We will resolutely implement our seven-step road map to fulfil the aspirations of the people. As part of the national reconciliation process, our Head of State has relayed a message through Ambassador Gambari to the effect that, should Daw Aung San Suu Kyi renounce her obstructive and confrontational stance, he would be ready to meet her personally. I am also happy to inform the Council that Ambassador Gambari has again been invited to visit Myanmar some time in November.

We are encouraged by the position that was expressed by the Secretary-General that no one can address the complex challenges facing Myanmar better than the Myanmar people themselves. I would like to recall, as Ambassador Gambari just mentioned, what Ambassador Gambari said to this body in an earlier briefing: the good offices role is a process and not an event. Patience, time and space are needed.

Cooperation with the United Nations is a basic tenet of Myanmar's foreign policy. It is in that context that we cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and Ambassador Gambari in connection with the good offices role mandated to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly. The process is proceeding well. More importantly, despite the recent tragic events, the situation in Myanmar is not — I repeat, not — a threat either to regional or to international peace and security. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the members of the Security Council that, both here and at their capitals, have taken that position. No Security Council action is warranted with regard to the situation in Myanmar.

I would therefore like to call on the Security Council to refrain from any action that would be detrimental to the good offices role of the Secretary-General mandated by the General Assembly. On our part, we will continue to cooperate with the United Nations. In that regard, I can do no better than to quote my Foreign Minister, who, in his address to the General Assembly, stated: "We will continue to work closely and cooperate actively with the United Nations" (*A/62/PV.13*).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): As a neighbour of Myanmar and a fellow member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), it is with a heavy heart that we speak today. Recent events in Myanmar cannot be overlooked or ignored, even by Myanmar's friends and neighbours.

That is why, on 27 September, we issued a statement in our capacity as ASEAN Chair. All ASEAN members were present, including nine of ten Foreign Ministers. The statement expressed revulsion over reports that the protests were being suppressed by

violence. It called for restraint, national reconciliation, the release of political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and for Myanmar to work towards a peaceful transition to democracy. In addition, the statement expressed support for the visit of United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari. It also referred to the serious impact on ASEAN's credibility. It therefore cannot be just an internal matter of Myanmar.

On 29 September, my Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, wrote to Senior General Than Shwe to convey his deep concern and to urge Myanmar to work with Mr. Gambari to find a way forward. On 2 October, my delegation in Geneva delivered a statement at the fifth special session of the Human Rights Council on the draft resolution on Myanmar and stressed the importance of supporting Mr. Gambari's mission. On 3 October, Prime Minister Lee met with Mr. Gambari to assure him of ASEAN's full support and to encourage him to press on with the United Nations efforts.

But we are here today to look forward, not back. To move forward, there are certain realities that we have to acknowledge. First, we need to recognize that the United Nations efforts, as embodied by Mr. Gambari, are unique and irreplaceable. At this stage, Mr. Gambari represents our best hope and is also the only game in town. Mr. Gambari is an experienced and gifted diplomat who seems to have gained the trust of both sides. The international community should buttress his position and invest him with the requisite support, authority and prestige. Mr. Gambari should return to Myanmar and resume his good offices role as soon as possible to sustain the momentum. We urge the Myanmar Government to continue to cooperate with the United Nations and Mr. Gambari.

Secondly, we should avoid falling into the trap of over-simplification. The situation in Myanmar is complicated. As the Secretary-General himself has noted, we should not prematurely try to pigeonhole Mr. Gambari's visit as a success or failure. He has succeeded in beginning a process that can bring change to Myanmar. The fact that Myanmar has allowed Mr. Gambari to visit three times, most recently in the midst of the present crisis, is encouraging. It shows that the Myanmar authorities want to maintain a line to the United Nations.

There are also reports that the authorities have released some of those detained. Unfortunately, many others are still being detained and arrests reportedly continue. Yesterday, Senior General Than Shwe announced that he was willing to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but he imposed preconditions on that meeting and, most regrettably, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remains in detention. Mr. Gambari's visit is the start of a long and arduous process.

Thirdly, we have to be pragmatic. It would be a grievous mistake to think that if the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) left the scene tomorrow, all would suddenly be well and all problems would automatically be resolved. The military is a key institution in Myanmar that cannot be wished away. Any peaceful solution to the crisis will have to involve all parties, including the military. If the military is not part of the solution, there will be no solution. If the process is mishandled, it could result in greater instability and more suffering for the Myanmar people. Thant Myint-U, a former United Nations Secretariat official and grandson of U Thant, warned recently that the world must be careful that the change it wants to see in Myanmar does not lead to the anarchy seen in Iraq.

Myanmar is not a homogeneous State. There are many armed ethnic groups that are opposed to central Government rule. Only a very tenuous ceasefire prevents the renewal of hostilities. That should not be an excuse for delaying necessary steps forward, but neither do we want a Yugoslavia in South-East Asia.

There has also been talk about additional sanctions. My delegation can understand the impulse to punish unacceptable behaviour. Indeed, we should not rule that out. But we have to pause to consider dispassionately what the real impact of additional sanctions will be. How will they affect a regime that is only tangentially connected to the rest of the world? Will they help or hinder the role of the United Nations? How will they affect the willingness of the SPDC to cooperate with Mr. Gambari? What is their impact on the people of Myanmar? All such actions should have only one objective, which is to strengthen Mr. Gambari's hand as an effective mediator.

Fourthly, ASEAN will take a responsible position. Myanmar is part of the ASEAN family. Whatever we may think about the behaviour of a family member, it is still a family member. But

ASEAN's influence is limited. That was underscored last year when the Myanmar authorities refused to seriously engage the ASEAN envoy. Yet, the same authorities received Mr. Gambari and arranged a substantial programme for him, which included meetings with Senior General Than Shwe and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. That was a clear signal of Myanmar's preferences.

It is in everyone's interest to keep Myanmar in the ASEAN family, but we are not Myanmar's only neighbour. China and India are two large countries with a long history of engagement with Myanmar. We believe that they are uniquely placed to play a role. In that regard, allow me to commend China for its quiet efforts, which we believe were instrumental in securing a substantive and useful visit for Mr. Gambari. We hope that India will play a similar role. Likewise, Japan has a role to play, because it is a major aid donor to Myanmar. All of us — the international community as a whole — must do our part. Because of the size and complexity of the undertaking, the good offices of the United Nations and Mr. Gambari offer the only new way forward.

The President: There are no other speakers inscribed on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5754

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5754th meeting

Friday, 5 October 2007, 1.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Kenes
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Azzarello
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Ansari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Desyatnikov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. McKenzie Smith
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

07-53073 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Poland, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Jurczynska (Poland) took at seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns the 3 October attack in Baghdad against the Polish Ambassador to Iraq, which resulted in the wounding of the Ambassador and the killing of one member of his personal security detachment team and injuries to two others. The attack also killed at least one Iraqi civilian.

"The Security Council expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims of this attack and to their families, and to the Government of the Republic of Poland.

"The Security Council underlines the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this act to justice and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate with the Governments of Poland and Iraq in this regard.

"The Security Council reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

"The Security Council also calls on the international community to support the Government of Iraq in exercising its responsibility in providing protection to the diplomatic community in Iraq, United Nations staff and other foreign civilian personnel working in Iraq.

"The Security Council further reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The Council reminds States that they must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

"The Security Council reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2007/36.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5755

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 October 2007

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5755th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 10 October 2007, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5755th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard briefings under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and by General Per Arne Five, Acting Military Adviser of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Annabi, General Five and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

07-53593 (E) 101007

United Nations S/PV.5756

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 October 2007

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5756th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 11 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 11 October 2007, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5756th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia and Head of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Arnault and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

07-53818 (E) 111007

United Nations S/PV.5757

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5757th meeting

Thursday, 11 October 2007, 1.35 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Kuwari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

07-53786 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the recent mission by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser to Myanmar, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, reaffirms its strong and unwavering support for the Secretary-General's good offices mission as mandated by General Assembly resolution 61/232, and expresses its appreciation for the personal engagement of the Secretary-General.

"The Security Council strongly deplores the use of violence against peaceful demonstrations in Myanmar and welcomes Human Rights Council resolution S-5/1 of 2 October 2007. The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the early release of all political prisoners and remaining detainees. It also calls on the Government of Myanmar and all other parties concerned to work together towards a de-escalation of the situation and a peaceful solution.

"The Security Council stresses the need for the Government of Myanmar to create the necessary conditions for a genuine dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all concerned parties and ethnic groups in order to achieve an inclusive national reconciliation, with the direct support of the United Nations. The Security Council encourages the Government of Myanmar to consider seriously Mr. Gambari's recommendations and proposals. The Security Council also calls on the Government of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to address the political, economic, humanitarian and human rights issues that are the concern of its people and emphasizes that the future of Myanmar lies in the hands of all of its people.

"The Security Council welcomes the Government of Myanmar's public commitment to work with the United Nations and the appointment of a liaison officer with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Security Council stresses the importance that such commitments be followed by action. It acknowledges that the Government of Myanmar had invited Mr. Gambari to Myanmar. It underscores its support for his return as early as possible in order to facilitate concrete actions and tangible results. The Security Council urges the Government of Myanmar and all parties concerned to cooperate fully with Mr. Gambari.

"The Security Council welcomes the important role played by the ASEAN countries in urging restraint, calling for a peaceful transition to democracy, and supporting the good offices mission. It notes that the good offices mission is a process, and encourages the sustained support and engagement of the international community in helping Myanmar.

"The Security Council remains seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2007/37.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5758

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5758th meeting

Monday, 15 October 2007, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Henzab
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2007/503)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

07-53998 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2007/503)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Spain and Uruguay, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/601, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Italy, Panama, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2007/503, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it (S/2007/601). Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Congo, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1780 (2007).

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5759

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5759th meeting

Monday, 15 October 2007, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Henzab
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2007/588)

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07-54004 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2007/588)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Germany, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Matussek (Germany) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/603, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, document S/2007/588.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it (S/2007/603). Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Congo, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1781 (2007).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5760

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5760th meeting

Monday, 15 October 2007, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2007/555)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

07-54010 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2007/555)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan and Portugal, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/555, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

As Council members are aware, this will be Mr. Koenig's last briefing to the Security Council as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. On behalf of the members of the Council, I would like to warmly thank Mr. Koenigs for the work he has done in Afghanistan under very challenging circumstances, for the useful briefings he has given this Council over the past two years and for his dedicated efforts in implementing the Council's resolutions on Afghanistan. In bidding him farewell, I wish him success and fulfilment in his future endeavours.

I now give the floor to Mr. Koenigs.

Mr. Koenigs: First of all, Sir, I wish to thank you for your kind words.

I am pleased to note that as we come together today to consider the way forward in Afghanistan, many of us here do so for the second or even a third time in a month. There could be no clearer indication of the priority that the international community rightly assigns to success in Afghanistan and the enduring commitment to a better future for all Afghans.

The most recent of these three meetings — the sixth Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting on 3 October in Kabul — focused on regional economic cooperation. After frank discussions, it took decisions on trade and transit, finalization of commercially viable power purchase agreements and facilitation of transborder labour movements and of voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Afghan refugees, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The huge importance of active regional cooperation for stability and economic development was stressed by all speakers.

However, despite the positive steps taken during the meeting, discussion of key topics highlighted a capacity deficit in regional cooperation, which must be addressed first and foremost within the Government of Afghanistan by the creation of supporting regional units in the lead ministries, led by the reinforced Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the region, a key target remains complementing the focus of Afghanistan's neighbours on their bilateral relationships by

furthering, and expanding upon, multilateral approaches to enduring stability for Afghanistan.

The coordination of international and Afghan military actors has improved at both the national and regional levels, and there have been significant tactical military successes in the south and in the east since I briefed this Council in March. In the past two months, the level of violence has subsided. Nonetheless, on a month-by-month basis, compared with last year, the number of violent incidents is up by approximately 30 per cent. So far this year, the United Nations has recorded 606 detonated improvised explosive devices and 133 suicide attacks, as compared with 88 at this time last year. That is a significant increase, and a sad result is the increase in the number of casualties — at least 1,200 civilians have been killed since January this year.

The Afghan National Army will be at around 47,000 soldiers strong by the end of this year. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan hopes to deliver a force of 70,000 by the end of 2008. At the same time, a programme of focused district development should begin to address the poor standards of the Afghan National Police. But numbers are not a measure of capability, and for the time being we must recognize that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) represents the most capable defence of the Government against the insurgency.

NATO and ISAF must work with the Government of Afghanistan and with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to ensure that an integrated political and military strategy and a shared security plan for Afghanistan that take full account of military, counter-insurgency, governance, development, reconstruction and human dimensions are sources of strength for all in standing against violence and bringing peace to Afghanistan over the winter months and throughout 2008. Key to the success of such an integrated strategy is the greater inclusion of Afghanistan's civilian and military leaders in the planning of security operations in regional commands, International Security Assistance Force headquarters, and NATO military headquarters.

In the current climate of instability and conflict, the lack of oversight mechanisms for human rights, especially with regard to the opacity of the mandate of the National Directorate for Security, the intelligence service, and lack of access to its facilities are of particular concern. It should also be added that the lack of coordination of the National Directorate for Security with both the justice system and, in some areas, even with other security organizations is a hindrance to security within the country. I urge the Government to investigate allegations of arbitrary detention and torture of detainees, granting UNAMA and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission unrestricted access to monitor the National Directorate for Security detention centres and activities throughout the country. One recommendation in that sense is to be found in paragraph 84 of the Secretary-General's report.

I was deeply troubled by the recent decision of the Afghan Government to execute 15 prisoners on 8 October. As members are all aware, the United Nations does not support the imposition of the death penalty and, specifically with regard to Afghanistan, in 2005 the Commission on Human Rights called on Afghan authorities to declare a moratorium on the death penalty in light of procedural and substantive flaws in the judicial system. I must take this opportunity to urge the Government to reinstate the moratorium and to respect the international laws governing the illegality of the death penalty when a fair trial cannot be guaranteed.

Although, amid the violence in Afghanistan, suicide attacks receive the most publicity, perhaps the biggest threat to the civilian population and overall stability is the ongoing campaign of intimidation, abduction and execution being carried out by anti-Government elements against all those seen to have a connection with the Afghan Government or the international community. It is imperative that the protection of civilians remain at the forefront of everyone's efforts in Afghanistan, for a failure to secure the population's support will not only protract the conflict, causing further devastation, but also hold the country's development hostage to violence and undermine the legitimacy of our efforts.

I am pleased to be able to note concrete steps taken by ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom on the issue of civilian casualties. Those include the issuance of orders to all regional commands to adjust tactics, where possible, to increase protection of civilians and the improvement of systems for compensation and information-sharing. The Security Council has reinforced such efforts to protect civilians in the new language of the International Security Assistance Force's recent mandate extension of 19 September in resolution 1776 (2007).

I wish to stress that there can be no further delays in addressing the twin challenges of governance and outreach, on which progress in Afghanistan depends. In order to thrive, Afghan communities require security and opportunity. While internationally supported military operations or, indeed, the ever-more capable Afghan National Army can potentially provide temporary security, opportunity requires a just institutional framework in which commitment to the Constitution's precepts — that is, good citizenship — is rewarded. Along with that, transgression must be punished. Only good governance, led by senior leadership within the Government and delivered through both the civilian and military arms of the State, will end the culture of corruption and impunity that has dangerously eroded public confidence.

The focus on shoring up the central Government has come at the cost of provincial administrations, which, as a result of being long neglected by both the Government and its international partners, are weak and undersupported. The creation last month of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) is belated, especially given that its task is undoubtedly one of the most important and difficult ones facing the administration today. The strategic framework recently presented by IDLG, which identifies the need to achieve transparent, accountable, participatory and inclusive governance, must be refined into concrete and manageable tasks, assigned across ministries, and pursued with determination.

I hope that donors wholeheartedly support IDLG's work, which should form the backbone of comprehensive political engagement and dramatically increase the public's trust in Government. Such a programme could build on the successful completion of this summer's sub-national consultations, which involved 11,000 people participating in the development of 35 provincial development plans. That will complement the ongoing work with the sector strategies and help ensure that the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, to be finalized by March next year, will be truly representative. I urge the international community to work closely with the Strategy and to support the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board secretariat to ensure that the Strategy becomes an enduring vehicle for the partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan.

For the dangers of weak governance, one need look no further than the 34 per cent increase in opium production in 2007. A disjointed international community approach, combined with a lack of Afghan leadership at the national and sub-national levels, has allowed drug traffickers to prosper. Where there has been success — for example in Balkh province, which was declared poppy free this year — it has been the direct result of unequivocal Afghan leadership. That should serve as a model for efforts throughout the country.

The dangers posed by the record poppy harvest have gone beyond the societal and health issues, as it has encouraged an alliance of convenience between the insurgents and drug lords. Both parties have an interest in a weak State and are further exploiting that synergy and fostering corruption among local administrators and key security officials, most often the police. If unchecked, those whose financial interests are served by the drug trade will use their profits to buy political power ahead of elections, which will in turn sow the seeds for a self-perpetuating narco-State.

For that reason, I would like to commend the Government and its international partners for its recent commitment, through the Policy Action Group on 10 October, to a 12-point action plan on which to base implementation of the national drug control strategy. While the actions are quite comprehensive, to be successful they will require determined leadership and great political will on the part of the Government, supported by all the international partners.

Capacity-building remains a key weapon with which to combat the corrosive power of corruption. In instances where Government and international efforts have been aligned and focused on institutional capacity development — such as in the Afghan National Army and the ministries of finance, education, health and rural development — there has been consolidated progress. Where that has not happened — such as in the Civil Service Commission, counter-narcotics, sub-national governance and the Ministry of Interior — progress has been limited.

The efforts of all those — in particular the Afghan Government, the United States and the European Union — whose great commitment to reforming the Afghan National Police has resulted in higher quality police chiefs, new standards of vetting

and professionalism, merit-based selection of police officials, improved vehicles and equipment and growing effectiveness on the part of the uniformed, border, traffic and civil order police in most parts of the country are highly appreciated.

Nevertheless, parts of the Ministry of Interior have proved resistant to principles of accountability and transparency, thereby hampering the development of the Afghan National Police. At the same time, the absence of a unified vision of the police that addresses the requirements of law enforcement and counter-insurgency has perpetuated an environment dominated by a culture of patronage and corruption. In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that, to date this year, the violent insurgency has cost more than 1,000 policemen their lives. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must urgently come together to develop a definitive structure for the National Police that embraces both gendarmerie and civilian police functions.

The Government of Afghanistan and its partners have only belatedly understood the specific role the police must play, and the additional support they require, in any successful counter-insurgency strategy. To that end, the recently formed International Police Coordination Board, whose mandate is to bring coherence to police development efforts, should be structured to function on the basis of Afghan leadership as the central policy body for police reform.

In the past two months, the President and the parliament have increasingly expressed the desire to conduct outreach to insurgents willing to reconcile with the Government. However, to be effective, national reconciliation will require a comprehensive strategy defined by the parameters of the Afghan constitution. I was told that several Taliban commanders have expressed the wish to live in peace under the current constitution — out of fear for their survival and uncertainty about the sustainability of their sanctuaries and in response to signals pointing towards the need for dialogue at many levels, above all in the wake of the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga held in early August. The Taliban as an organization remains, at least in part, determined to continue its military campaign. There are currently no prospects for negotiations with the top leadership of the Taliban.

In the past few weeks, the parliament passed legislation governing political parties, the structure of the Government and property. Many of those subjects have provoked discussion and even controversy, none more so than the Media Law. In the version ultimately approved by both houses of parliament — which post-dates the one referred to in paragraph 16 of the report (S/2007/555) of the Secretary-General — the independence of Afghan media has been largely protected. Extensive lobbying by Afghan journalists and civil society and by the international community, including UNAMA, appears to have been successful in many respects.

The President and his supporters responded to the formation, in May, of the National United Front — a political opposition party with which several members of the Cabinet are associated — with the recent registration of a Republican Party, to which other Cabinet members belong. That growing political diversity is the healthiest indicator yet that Afghans are taking charge of their own destiny and that the perspectives of key political players in Afghanistan both within and outside the Government have shifted from post-electoral to pre-electoral concerns.

As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, at their meeting in May, the members of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board of the Afghanistan Compact recommended that the Government and the National Assembly should ensure the Assembly's timely adoption of an electoral law that would allow for cost-effective and secure elections, as called for by the Afghanistan Compact. At the President's request, the parliament is currently considering the merits of harmonizing the presidential and parliamentary election cycles, which expire in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

I urge the international community to ensure that it supports election preparations in a coherent manner, with the goal of achieving well-prepared, free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections at the central and district levels. To that end, I encourage donors to meet the shortfall from the previous elections and to provide the necessary resources for a voter registry and for building the capacity of the Independent Electoral Commission.

UNAMA will continue to play its central coordinating role and take new initiatives in the areas where we can make a meaningful contribution. With its 17 offices in the field, and in the numerous working groups of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring

Board, UNAMA will make its best efforts to deliver effective coordination throughout the country at the national and sub-national levels. With a view to reinforcing regional and provincial offices, in its 2008 budget submission, UNAMA will request a moderate increase in international posts, including for the police and military advisory units. It should be stressed that UNAMA's activities, in particular in the field, must be carried out with all precautionary measures to protect our staff. That requires sufficient resources. On all those issues, the support of Council members is highly appreciated.

Notwithstanding the serious challenges facing Afghanistan, it is heartening to be able to report the involvement of several thousand people in marches and other activities throughout Afghanistan on the International Day of Peace, which was observed on 21 September. The UNAMA-led communications campaign begun in July to mobilize grass-roots voices for peace culminated in peace debates, spontaneous gatherings and, perhaps most important, a successful Government of Afghanistan/UNICEF/World Health Organization Peace Day polio vaccination campaign in previously inaccessible areas of the south and east.

We commend the clear resolve of the Afghan people, who have now been battered by nearly 30 years of war and conflict, to build on their achievements of the past six years by contributing to a genuine peace process that embraces civil society, tribal groups, elected representatives, the legitimate Government and opposition groups and that engages all in a common effort to make national reconciliation a real prospect.

Finally, I would like to thank the Council for its continuing commitment to the peace process in Afghanistan and to UNAMA's mission. On a more personal note, I would like to thank the Council for the support it has given me — which in many cases went beyond diplomatic routine — as the leader of UNAMA, which is one of the most challenging and fascinating of United Nations missions.

The President: I thank Mr. Koenigs for his briefing.

Before opening the floor, I wish to request all participants to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank speakers for their understanding and cooperation.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): I would like to thank Mr. Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his comprehensive report and for his continued dedication to the Mission. I would also like to extend the thanks of the United States to all the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), who have worked so hard over the course of the United Nations mandate to help the Afghan people build a democratic State that protects fundamental human rights, provides security and other services and offers economic opportunity.

As in the case of past reports, the Special Representative has brought us up to date on the progress that Afghanistan has made with the support of the international community. He has also kept us up to date on the significant challenges and threats that Afghanistan still faces.

This report highlights that the international community must continue to stand united in support of the Afghan Government and of the Afghan people for success in Afghanistan. We must continue our productive efforts to reaccelerate State-building and capacity-building, help create a robust agriculture sector that will reduce the incentives to grow opium and will strengthen the rule of law, security, and human rights.

We must also support the Afghan Government in exerting its authority throughout the country. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan plays a critical role in that area, whether it is helping the Afghan Government to fight the threats of corruption and narcotics, coordinating humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, or helping to build capacity and integrity at the local level, where the Afghan people most often interact with the State.

Afghanistan has made significant progress, but it is going through a critically important and difficult transition. We applaud the strong leadership and dedication of the Secretary-General and Mr. Koenigs in their support of Afghanistan's emergence as a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic member of the family of nations.

We also take great satisfaction that the Special Representative reports that 6 million Afghan children are now in school — the highest number in the country's history — and over two million of them are

girls; that there has been steady improvement in economic conditions with preliminary estimates showing economic growth at eight per cent and a bumper wheat harvest of 4.5 million tons; and that there has been additional progress in the areas of health, road building, and rural development.

Nevertheless, security is still an enormous concern and the Taliban has recently resorted to vicious measures, increasingly relying on suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices, in an effort to terrorize the population and undermine the Afghan Government. As Secretary Rice explained in Brussels earlier this year,

> "The violence we are seeing is not evidence that our strategy has failed, nor that the situation will improve in our absence; rather, it is evidence of how much we are needed. It is evidence that we must do more — and do it better, faster".

It is vitally important that Afghanistan succeed. Afghanistan was the safe haven of today's global terrorist threat, and enabling Afghans to eliminate that threat within their borders will be a strategic victory for Afghans, for the friends of Afghanistan in the international community, and for the United Nations.

Afghans are eager to take on a greater role in their own security. As we speak, the Afghan National Army and its civilian command structure are taking on increasing responsibility in securing their borders and their people. The Afghan National Army is a respected institution in Afghanistan and it is now more than 35,000 strong, with a target size of 70,000. The Special Representative's report points out that, "increased training and mentoring has improved the army's capacity to plan and conduct joint operations with coalition forces and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)/ISAF," (S/2007/555, para. 30) and that is good news. But we must increase these joint efforts to train, mentor and equip the Afghan National Army and Police and we must provide every measure of support to the United Nations-mandated, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In particular, we owe it to the people of Afghanistan to give commanders the forces and flexibility they need to bring stability, reconstruction and good governance to all of Afghanistan. Stability in Afghanistan is vital not only to Afghans, but to the security and well-being of all free peoples who stand opposed to terror and injustice.

The Afghan people have come a long way in recovering from the tyranny of the Taliban. It is essential that we maintain the unity and commitment of the international community to help the Afghan people complete the transition from tyranny to liberty, and I am gratified that the Special Representative's report indicates that international support to Afghanistan has intensified.

While the international community's assistance to Afghanistan has been great, the needs are greater still. We must not slacken in our resolve to provide the Afghan people with the tools to rebuild. The Afghanistan Compact showed us the way, but progress is only possible if the entire international community digs deep to provide funds for reconstruction and experts to mentor on governance, justice, agriculture, and commerce.

And with the need for more assistance, comes the need for better coordination. In this regard, it is important that we find a strong United Nations envoy who, in support of the Government of Afghanistan, will coordinate international civilian efforts in Afghanistan and donor capitals.

With great challenges still ahead of us, we must maintain our resolve. The United States sees long-term assistance to Afghanistan as a strategic imperative, and we look forward to continuing to work together with other members of the Council as we engage in assisting the government and the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by welcoming Mr. Tom Koenigs, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and thanking him for his briefing to the Council. In this regard, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and to its commitment to extend its role by opening offices in Day Kundi and Ghor Provinces. We would also like to pay tribute to the staff of the mission, who are working in difficult circumstances.

The future of Afghanistan depends on achieving the goals and objectives of the Bonn Agreement concluded almost six years ago. The ensuing political transition process has begun to unravel and has deviated from its original specific course. The political landscape in Afghanistan is made up of an interdependent network that brings together all the

country's political groups. Therefore, there must be a focus on active participation by all parties, in order to establish a political process with democracy at its core. The country needs genuine internal unity. There is also a need for political awareness among political actors of all stripes. Such a cohesive approach would enable Afghanistan to realize the dream of political security and stability.

Taliban attacks have increased considerably. The movement is currently leading an intense insurgency and relies increasingly on suicide attacks and other tactics. This situation undermines confidence in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The worsening of the security situation in the country must be addressed as soon as possible.

Only a few provinces in Afghanistan enjoy security and stability. We appreciate the role played by the Afghan Government and NATO in maintaining security and stability, and we stress the need to exert more efforts within the framework of constructive cooperation between the Afghan Government, its neighbours and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), with the assistance of the international community, in order to establish security without compromising human rights in the country. That is a vital role that must be played by the international community.

We express our concern about the number of innocent civilians killed by accident while terrorism was being fought in Afghanistan.

The question of security is linked to reconstruction, development and combating narcotics. Therefore, military strategies must go hand in hand with plans for development and national reconciliation.

While we welcome the role being played by the Government in Afghanistan, we are aware of the scope of the difficulties facing it. Thus, we hope that the central Government can develop a new mechanism that will enable it to deal with all its opponents. Let us not forget that the Afghan people need cohesiveness, because they have endured hardship and uncertainty and have made great sacrifices in their long quest for peace, freedom, well-being and independence.

International support for Afghanistan has recently increased. That positive development should result in the formulation of new initiatives to address challenges in the areas of security, poverty, rehabilitating the infrastructure, ensuring respect for human rights and improving Afghanistan's political environment. My delegation welcomes the recent meetings held in support of Afghanistan, including the Tokyo and Rome conferences on the rule of law in the country. Those conferences resulted in a consensus on the need for a national justice programme and a sectoral strategy based on an Afghan monitoring and assessment system supervised by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. We also welcome the recent high-level meeting of Board members, held in new York on 23 September.

The problem of illicit drugs remains among the difficult obstacles to the achievement of stability and security for the people of Afghanistan. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has reported a 17 per cent increase in opium poppy cultivation and a potential 34 per cent increase in opium production. Thus, it is obvious that the implementation of the national anti-drug strategy has not achieved satisfactory results. Areas such as Hilmand and the eastern province of Nangarhar are major sources of opium. Greater efforts and planning must focus on providing alternative sources of income for farmers.

The spirit of solidarity that unites our nations and our peoples with the brotherly people of Afghanistan obliges us to shoulder our historic responsibility. The State of Qatar reaffirms its principled commitment to working to achieve stability in Afghanistan and continuing to provide support to the Afghan people. It joins with the international community in its efforts to achieve those goals in order to promote reconstruction in that brotherly country.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his briefing. China appreciates the vigorous efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to promote reconstruction in Afghanistan. We are prepared to continue to support the Special Representative and UNAMA in their work.

China is pleased to note that, with the help of the international community, including the United Nations, Afghanistan has made progress in its recovery and development. In political terms, the Afghan Government, led by President Karzai, has undertaken measures to combat corruption and to actively seek political reconciliation. In economic terms, this year

Afghanistan has achieved basic self-sufficiency in its food supply and has maintained steady economic growth. In the areas of education and health care, the enrolment of primary-school students has reached a historic high and infant and maternal mortality rates have continued to decline. The Government has reached out to neighbours and other countries to engage in friendly cooperation.

At the same time, however, there remain many grave challenges to peaceful reconstruction in Afghanistan. Extremists and terrorists continue to pose a serious threat to peace and prosperity. The country's institutional capacity still needs to be strengthened at various levels. Economic and social development still cannot satisfy the people's basic needs. The cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs are on the rise.

China believes that, in addressing those challenges, priority must be accorded to the following aspects. First, security is the primary issue facing Afghanistan. The international community must provide additional resources to expedite the building of the military and police forces so that they can, at an early date, independently shoulder their responsibility for the maintenance of national security and social stability.

Secondly the functions of Government need to be strengthened. Accelerated economic development is the key to achieving long-term stability in the country. The Government must work hard to produce strong teams of qualified civil servants and must continue to seek stability and promote development if it is to achieve concrete results in the areas of economic reconstruction, education, health care, human rights and the rule of law. In that way, the people's confidence in the future of the country can be restored.

Thirdly, the United Nations should continue to play a central and coordinating role in the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and in international assistance to that end. China supports UNAMA's consistently neutral position in its role of promoting political reconciliation in the country. We also hope that the international community will provide more material and human resources to UNAMA.

Fourthly, regional cooperation is an effective means through which the international community can help Afghanistan to achieve stability and good governance. We hope that Afghanistan and its neighbours will fully utilize existing mechanisms to enhance mutual political trust, to strengthen cooperation in combating terrorist activities and drug trafficking and to seek mutual development.

As a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China feels great empathy with Afghanistan with regard to the hardship that it has endured. We sincerely hope that Afghanistan can soon build a strong and prosperous State and achieve social harmony and well-being. To that end, China has participated actively in efforts aimed at post-war reconstruction in Afghanistan. Over the past five years, we have provided Afghanistan with assistance in the form of engineering projects, material assistance and the training of personnel. We are currently focusing on building the Republic Hospital in Kabul, the Parwan irrigation project and the presidential compound conference centre. The President of China, Mr. Hu Jintao, announced a few days ago that this year, the Chinese Government will once again provide Afghanistan with a grant, in the amount of 18 million yuan.

Although the road ahead remains rocky, the Afghan people have high expectations and enduring faith that they will achieve peace, stability, security and development. That gives us every reason to be confident that, through the efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan and the assistance of the international community, that ancient and beautiful land, which has known despair, will once again see the blossoming of hope, as well as new and notable achievements in the process of its peaceful reconstruction.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Koenigs for his briefing and to commend him for the remarkable work that he has accomplished over the past two years in a difficult context.

France fully subscribes to the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

The situation described by Mr. Koenigs gives us reasons both for hope and for concern. We have reasons for hope when we assess the progress made since beginning of the Bonn process: central Afghan institutions are functioning; administration is being strengthened in a number of provinces; the economy is growing; civil society is active; as has been stated, school is being attended by many boys and girls; the infant mortality rate is declining; there is broad

participation by women in the formulation of the National Development Strategy; and the country is already preparing for the 2009 parliamentary and presidential elections.

But there is uncertainty with regard to the future of the process begun in Bonn in 2001, first because the success achieved by the Afghan National Army on the ground with the support of international forces has not yet translated into a marked weakening of the insurgent groups, which do not hesitate to resort to terrorist tactics. The Afghan Government is also having difficulty establishing the rule of law in many parts of the country. Too often, illegal armed groups, drug traffickers and local warlords take advantage of the weakness of State institutions and the corruption of some authorities to assert their own interests, to the detriment of the most basic rights of the population. That situation provides the Taliban and other extremist groups with a breeding ground.

The deterioration of the human rights situation, already mentioned here, is to be deplored. Beyond the disappearances and cases of torture mentioned by Mr. Koenigs, virulent attacks by some Afghan politicians, notably members of Parliament, against the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission is of great concern. We reaffirm our support for the work of the Commission and ask the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to be very vigilant.

France and the European Union were profoundly saddened to hear the announcement of the execution on 7 October of 15 persons who had been condemned to death. France reiterates the call of the European Union urging the Afghan authorities to reinstate as soon as possible the moratorium on executions. France also notes that the lack of due process in the trials of the persons concerned and the secrecy of the executions are not in compliance with international human rights standards.

In order to consolidate the advances of the last six years, the Afghan authorities and the international community must ensure reform of the security and justice sector. The Afghan Government needs to show the necessary political will through compliance with its commitments under the Afghanistan Compact of 2006.

We have confidence in President Karzai, but that political will cannot be translated into reality on the ground unless the international community and in particular neighbouring countries mobilize their full and unambiguous support. In that vein, France is pleased to see the developments in the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan since the peace jirga held in August 2007. Afghanistan needs to play a greater role in regional affairs.

France will increase its effort both at the military level, stressing operational training of the Afghan army, and in civil reconstruction, so that the Afghan people can harvest the fruits of a return to peace and security.

Military success can achieve long-term effects only if it is part of a global political strategy. Clearly, UNAMA has a central role to play in the revitalization of the international presence in Afghanistan. Only the United Nations has the legitimacy — because of its recognized impartiality — and the necessary expertise to develop a global approach to consolidating the democratic transition process in support of the Afghan Government. There has been significant strengthening of the presence of UNAMA in Afghanistan over the past months and we welcome the extension of that presence while noting any security concerns. France also calls upon other actors in the area, in particular the International Security Assistance Force and the provincial reconstruction teams, to ensure that UNAMA is well integrated into their efforts.

Finally, we must give the United Nations the necessary support so that it may fully carry out its role in spurring political and strategic action in Afghanistan. In that spirit, France has announced its interest in the appointment of a leading political figure who would be able to ensure better coordination of international civilian and military activities. It seems to us that it is urgent that the United Nations become the voice of the international community with regard to the Afghan people.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his statement, which clearly highlighted the progress made as well as the challenges that remain to be met.

In supplementing the statement that will be made soon by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, I would like to offer the following comments.

Both the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/555) and the briefing of Mr. Koenigs

heavily underscored the need for a comprehensive approach as well as the need for further coordination. Belgium fully shares that view and in particular emphasizes the importance of proper coordination between the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The considerable increase in opium production is very worrisome, in particular given the ties between drug traders and the rebels, as well as the negative effects of drug money on State institutions which are still fragile. The Afghan Government must shoulder its responsibilities and take the necessary measures. That is also necessary in the framework of the struggle against corruption and the advancement of good government.

Afghan capacity in the area of security and the rule of law must be strengthened to enable the authorities to take over. In that context, Belgium welcomes the launching of the European Union Police Mission. As proposed by the Secretary-General, my delegation encourages the Afghan authorities to consider the simultaneous organization of legislative and presidential elections in the near future.

In the human rights field, Belgium deeply regrets that 15 people condemned to death were executed last week and requests that the Afghan authorities reinstate as quickly as possible the moratorium on executions. Belgium also regrets that the National Acton Plan for the Women of Afghanistan has not yet been implemented.

My country condemns most strongly all attacks on civilians and the Afghan and international security forces. The recent suicide attacks in Kabul demonstrate once more the cost in human lives that the non-respect for the fundamental values of a society by those who oppose the process under way, can cause. That should convince the Afghan authorities and the international community to pursue the efforts begun with respect to the rule of law, as the sole guarantee to ensure that the Afghan population retains confidence in its institutions or, more simply, in its future.

At the regional level, neighbouring countries can make a significant contribution to peace and security in Afghanistan. In that context, my delegation is pleased to note the recent international initiatives designed to strengthen cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours. The joint declaration that concluded the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga organized in Kabul in August 2007 is an important step towards strengthening relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

My delegation welcomes the adoption on 19 September of resolution 1776 (2007) extending by one year the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force. Since 2002, Belgium has been contributing to ISAF. Since October, the Belgium contingent has been reinforced and now numbers 367 men and women deployed in Kabul but who are also contributing to the provincial reconstruction team in Kunduz. In taking over command of the international airport in Kabul, Belgium will be devoting particular attention to the training of Afghan airport personnel so that they can eventually take over the management of the airport.

Finally, as Chairman of the 1267 Committee, Belgium continues to believe that the sanctions regime imposed on the Taliban, Al-Qaida and their associates is a powerful instrument in combating terrorism in a general manner and in working for the stabilization of Afghanistan, in particular.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his briefing and express our gratitude for his very important work.

Peru appreciates the will of the Government and people of Afghanistan, as well as that of the international community, in renewing their commitment to attend to the difficult challenges that Afghanistan faces in attaining peace and in reconstructing the country and its institutions. In spite of that will, we see that, with the exception of some significant achievements in the areas of education, public health and food security, the deterioration of the internal, political and military situations, as well as in the fight against drug trafficking, means that this Council is facing a situation of great concern.

Afghanistan has evolved in an unexpected direction over the last few months. This dangerous trend means that we need to reassess the strategies and tactics used and correct the activities of the Afghan Government and the international community. In this regard, we welcome the recent meetings of the member States of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

We recognize that the entire country is not equally affected by the same issues. In general, the security situation, especially in the Southwest and the East, is affected by a steady stream of terrorist attacks and the activities of illegal armed groups. The situation is increasingly complex because of the affliction of drug-trafficking. After six years, the increase in suicide attacks and terrorist attacks shows that Taliban, Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups are resilient and are acting increasingly in concert with criminal sectors, in addition to adopting convergent strategies.

In this context, we believe that the Afghan State should adjust its security and reconciliation strategy to better respond to its adversary. Security in Afghanistan must be taken up as a priority by its own citizens. We need better coordination between the Afghan security forces and the international security presence, as suggested by the Secretary-General. Similarly, an in-depth overhaul is needed regarding the situation of the Afghan National Police.

On the other hand, we must avoid military operations that incur Afghan civilian victims and produce a negative impact on the legitimacy of the cooperation with the Afghan Government. The protection of civilians and their human rights, as well as the respect for humanitarian obligations and international law, must be at the very centre of all security operations.

It is clear that the strategy to fight drug-trafficking is not working in many parts of Afghanistan. The international efforts of the last six years have coincided with an exponential increase in poppy, opium and morphine production in Afghanistan. In 2007, Afghanistan produced a record amount of opium never before attained. This leads to a grave problem of credibility in the social, economic and political efforts aimed at reconstruction in Afghanistan, with repercussions related to security and democratic governance. Regional and international cooperation are more necessary than ever to counteract the increase of power of the drug trade, even with democratic structures and institutions.

Peru would stress the importance of supporting the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its fundamental assault on the serious problem of drugs, using a policy of shared responsibility under the leadership of the Government of Afghanistan and in cooperation with the international community. But it is necessary for there to be effective results with immediate economic benefits to the more than 3 million Afghans who live off of the drug trade. The political system must also be freed of the perverse affects of this plague.

The international community continues to endorse the construction of a democratic, peaceful and reconciled Afghanistan, free from terrorism and drug-trafficking, prepared to return to the path of development. There cannot be strong democracy without multi-lateral dialogue and unity of action. The Government needs to create synergies and provide political and administrative direction to the country, while fighting impunity and corruption.

It is necessary to recognize that Afghanistan needs sustained and constant attention, not only to strengthen security, but also to reconstruct a physical infrastructure to promote development, reduce poverty and create opportunities for well-being that will contribute to peace and stability.

In closing, we feel that the financial support of the international community, as well as donors, is crucial to the international development strategy that will be launched in March of 2008.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the President for having organized this important meeting on the most recent events on the situation in Afghanistan.

We also wish to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), for the complete and detailed presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/555), which describes a complex and unstable situation which can only be a source of justified concern, even if there are reasons for hope.

Congo would like to express its sincere gratitude to the personnel of UNAMA and of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the efforts they are making in the field to complete their highly dangerous tasks.

As was noted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his statement, significant progress has been made in certain areas, which he cited, but the security issue is an ever growing problem with the rebellions of the Taliban and other extremist groups. According to the report of the Secretary-General

(S/2007/555), their attacks have increased by 20 per cent as compared to the year 2006. My delegation therefore has questions regarding the mobilization capacity of the Taliban, given the heavy losses that they have incurred. Most of the victims of this terror are, above all, the rebels themselves; but there are also, and we deeply regret this, numerous casualties in the ranks of the Afghan security forces and innocent civilians, as well as ISAF soldiers, as was shown by the recent attack in Kabul.

As Mr. Koenigs pointed out during his statement, more than 1200 civilians have died as a result of these attacks since January 2007. The revival of the Taliban rebellion and that of other extremist groups, the barbaric methods including suicide attacks against civilians and international and Afghan forces, the abductions of civilians and campaigns of intimidation have destabilizing affects on the general situation in Afghanistan.

The capacity for inflicting harm by the Taliban and other extremist groups is therefore a genuine subject of concern, because it not only exacerbates the deteriorating security situation, but also increasingly affects the living conditions of the Afghan population. It is therefore necessary and urgent to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan armed forces and the police, within the framework of an anti-insurrection strategy, as underscored by the Secretary-General in paragraph 9 of his report (S/2007/555).

My delegation notes with concern the continuation of poppy growing, as well as the production and trafficking in opium, both important sources of financing for the Taliban. Trafficking poses a significant danger, not only for the Afghan nation itself, but also for the entire international community, as indicated by the study of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In that connection, my delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General on the creation by Afghanistan of a pilot plan to combat drugs, with the support of the international community and in particular of UNODC. However, if it is to be effective, the campaign must fully address the imperative need for a substitution economy to allow those who depend on growing poppies and dealing in opium to find other sources of income and well-being.

It is equally necessary to strengthen the institutions participating in the advancement of the rule of law. Although progress has been made in the quest for a comprehensive approach to security, governance and development in Afghanistan on the basis of the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan Government continues to suffer from certain weaknesses, in particular in fighting corruption, which could be readily exploited by the Taliban and other extremist groups. The difficulties encountered by the Anti-Corruption Commission established by President Karzai reveal that this scourge has infected several levels of Afghan society. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, the impact of Government action in this field remains unclear. The patronage system undermines such efforts all too often.

My delegation therefore endorses the Secretary-General's recommendations on reforming the police, the National Army and the judicial sector, with the support of international donors, in order to establish the rule of law in Afghanistan. We note with satisfaction the creation of the International Police Coordination Board, under Afghan authority, and the deployment of the European Police Mission.

The creation of the Good Performers Initiative to promote the development of the provinces, and in particular the eradication of all activities linked to drug trafficking, is a very positive move that deserves support. However, it is important for the Afghan authorities to consider easing administrative and financial procedures in order to assist access to the fund by several categories of recipients.

My delegation also notes with interest that Afghanistan is acting to promote peaceful relations with its neighbours in a turbulent region where myriad situations are often inextricably intertwined. The commitment of the Afghan and Pakistani Governments to addressing such joint problems as opium production and trafficking and terrorism and to coordinating their efforts to limit opposition raids in Afghanistan is also a positive factor to be encouraged. The Congo therefore urges the two countries to ensure the implementation of the joint declaration on promoting cooperation and assistance through collaboration and understanding, including projects pursued in such fields as the repatriation of refugees and economic development on both sides of the border.

Moreover, the general agreement on bilateral cooperation signed with the Islamic Republic of Iran indicates a favourable attitude to good-neighbourly

relations, which Afghanistan so badly needs to ensure its own stability. The Congo therefore supports all such initiatives, which are helping to stabilize the internal situation in Afghanistan and the region.

The Congo also welcomes the initiatives of the international community that are helping to improve security, stability and reconstruction in the country. The Conference held in Rome on 2 and 3 July, the high-level meeting held in New York on 23 September and previous meetings also emphasized the common resolve to seek a lasting solution to the Afghan crisis.

It should be noted that millions of Afghans remain in exile in Iran and Pakistan. The situation requires intensive consideration and consistent commitment on the part of the international community in regard both to voluntary returns and to finding alternative solutions for some groups of Afghans who cannot return to their country.

The Congo supports the effective commitment of the United Nations in the role of central and impartial coordinator that it has played to date.

In conclusion, I recall that, in seeking successfully to accomplish its task of reconciliation and expand its territorial reach, the Afghan Government expects a great deal from the varied contributions of the Security Council. The Council should make A substantive effort in that respect when it considers requests made by the Afghan Government, in particular concerning former Taliban, because the strengthening of institutions remains a key factor in achieving lasting peace and stability in the country.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenigs, for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, and congratulate him on his excellent work at the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA plays an invaluable role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and we hope that it will continue to extend its assistance to all Afghan territory so as to bring peace dividends to a people that has known very little peace in recent decades.

We note with concern that acts of violence carried out by insurgents and terrorists have increased since 2006 and are clearly linked to criminal activities, institutional corruption and illegal drug trafficking. The Government of Afghanistan, with the ongoing and tireless support of the international community, must exercise firm political resolve to prevent further backsliding in terms of security. In that respect, we commend and support the Secretary-General's recommendation that Afghanistan and its neighbour Pakistan implement a joint strategy on cross-border peace and security.

Since our debate earlier this year, the security situation in the region has improved. It may be necessary, inter alia, to consider altering the strategy by which the international community is carrying out its mission. For example, in fighting insurgents and terrorists, the international forces execute a great many aerial attacks that have claimed high numbers of innocent civilian victims. It would be appropriate to find alternatives to that and any other policy that undermines the support and good will of the Afghan people for the presence of the international community.

We agree with the opinion expressed in the Secretary-General's report that re-establishing lasting security is a prerequisite of development and requires a multidimensional strategy coordinating military, police, political, and economic and social development activities. UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force, as well as the coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom, in close coordination with the Government of Afghanistan and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, are key components of that strategy.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We join others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his valuable presentation of the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Afghanistan.

There has been timid progress in such areas as the rule of law, the disbanding of illegal armed groups, and counter-narcotics in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General's report makes it clear that increased insurgent activities, the escalating cultivation of opium poppies, and slow progress in economic and social development persist in Afghanistan. Promoting security and stability in Afghanistan remains the vital challenge currently facing that country. The security problem is clearly the main challenge because it poses a serious threat to nation-building in the country. We support the efforts of the Afghan security forces, in cooperation with the International Security Assistance Force, to maintain security in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General's report described the state of affairs in Afghanistan in all its complexities. Its paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 may well be the synthesis of the present situation. The Government is making commendable progress in areas such as the economy, reconstruction, development and in strengthening democratic institutions. For this reason, we reiterate our support for the role played by the Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

The report also draws a bleak picture of the narcotics issue in Afghanistan. Despite the efforts by the Government to adopt counter-narcotics measures, the report makes it clear that opium poppy cultivation and production experienced an unprecedented increase in 2007. This increase in poppy cultivation is very alarming and constitutes a growing threat to national security, social stability and governmental effectiveness.

The Secretary-General's report sadly notes once again that civilians continue to bear the consequences of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, we are encouraged by the fact that United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has started to closely monitor the situation of civilians in armed conflict.

We call on the Government to put additional efforts into the implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy. In addition, we recognize the link between narcotics and development. In this context, we have also encouraged the Government of Afghanistan to provide alternative livelihoods to farmers. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to improve its institutional capacity for service, delivery and development in support of viable alternatives to poppy cultivation.

We also call on the international community to continue rallying behind Afghan-led efforts to curb the drug problem through development. We welcome the improved relations between Afghanistan and its neighbours. The Secretary-General's report notes in paragraph 26 that "Tensions in the crucial relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan eased during the reporting period". We commend this improvement in the relations between the two countries, as it is critical to foster the trust required to improve security in the border areas and to achieve peace and stability in the region. We would like to stress the importance of regional cooperation in the success of Afghanistan.

On the political front, South Africa supports political dialogue and peaceful efforts aimed at achieving reconciliation and resolving challenges facing the country.

Finally, we believe that the best way to break the cycle of challenges in Afghanistan is to continue sustained international efforts in support of the Government of Afghanistan.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): At the outset, allow me, like previous speakers, to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, for his comprehensive briefing this morning. We also commend his dedication and efforts to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him. Our voice of appreciation extends as well to the staff members of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

My delegation aligns itself to the statement to be delivered later by the Portuguese delegation on behalf of the European Union presidency.

It has now been almost six years since the end of the rule of the previous regime in Afghanistan. The country has made significant steps towards political, economic and social development. The role of the United Nations has undoubtedly been instrumental in those strides, as has been that of the international community.

However, in spite of all these efforts, the situation continues to deteriorate, as noted throughout the Secretary-General's report. Opium production has increased so that Afghanistan is almost the world's sole producer. The return of the Taliban is strong in some provinces, posing challenges to the authority of the Government.

We used to note that the situation in Afghanistan is complex and that many factors need to be addressed at the same time for Afghanistan to be able to fulfil its priorities in the strategies adopted for the country. However, it is only security and positive economic outlooks that matter at the end of the day.

Under these conditions, the deterioration of the situation security situation must be addressed as a matter of priority to ensure that the country does not

return to overall instability. More needs to be done to increase the manpower of the Afghan National Army and even more to address widespread corruption in the Afghan National Police and the Ministry of the Interior, as all these institutions compose the cornerstone of the public trust and of the confidence invested in the Government.

Security sector reform strategies have to be combined in a more coherent manner with plans for development. The role and the impact of the decisions of the Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board should be significantly strengthened, as too many actors are currently managing and implementing various pieces of the Afghan National Development Strategy. Fragmentation of foreign aid has been noted many times by Afghan representatives, and that issue has to be seriously addressed.

We would like to support more creative and incentive-based measures by the Afghan Government, such as, for example, the establishment of a well-endowed good performance fund to benefit the provincial administrations that eradicate the poppy. Rewarding compliance with the law has many positive effects on behaviour and on the responsiveness of local actors to the security and development goals of the central Government.

A national reconciliation process has the potential to strongly impact the understanding and cooperation of various groups and communities within Afghanistan with the central Government. It would facilitate regional stabilization, so this process and its results should be supported by the international community in all forums, including the 1267 sanctions Committee. In this sense, we agree with the Belgian Ambassador that that is an important and powerful instrument. We also note the first listing in the Taliban section of the 1267 consolidated lists after almost six years of no activity.

UNAMA has played an indispensable role in contributing to an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of stability and economic development and to cooperation of various stakeholders currently in the field. At this stage, UNAMA will continue to take a central role in promoting international commitment to support the Afghanistan Compact, coordinate humanitarian assistance, contribute to the protection of human rights and support regional cooperation. We continue to encourage UNAMA to promote its presence in the provinces and to strengthen its partnership with local authorities.

Slovakia supports international efforts in Afghanistan through its bilateral, in kind and military contributions. At the same time, it is looking for all other possible ways to assist the Afghan Administration throughout this difficult period of time.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Koenigs for his statement today and the Secretary-General for the very thorough and comprehensive report.

As we review the present situation in Afghanistan, it is important to recognize how much progress has been made since 2001 and the fall of the Taliban. At the same time, I do not think anyone — certainly not the United Kingdom — underestimates the challenges ahead. The emergence of a new democracy is always a fragile process. Democracy is taking root in Afghanistan. The task of the international community, led by the United Nations, is to nourish and support it.

The United Nations is key to coordination of international community, particularly in Kabul itself. Some important progress has been made, as Mr. Koenigs has set out, including through the work of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. There is much more to do, including on the institutional challenges that are so clearly set out in this report.

We also look forward to a further expansion of United Nations efforts and presence in Afghanistan, including to provinces of the south. Afghanistan also needs the positive support of its neighbours. We welcome the steps taken in the last few months on Afghan-Pakistani cooperation, including August's peace jirga.

As the report of the Secretary-General acknowledges, international forces are playing a crucial role in helping to bring about a stable and secure Afghanistan. We pay tribute to those of all nationalities, including many Afghans, who have lost their lives in doing so. Like others, we are appalled by the tactics used by the opponents of democracy, including the increased use of suicide bombers. The contrast between those risking their lives to allow Afghans to build a better future and those determined to return Afghanistan to its dark past is stark indeed.

The other element in the equation is building the capacity of the Afghan security forces. The report of the Secretary-General recognizes the work being done by the international community in supporting the increasingly capable Afghan National Army. The task of building police capacity remains more of a challenge. We welcome the conclusions of the Secretary-General on the need for an effective civilian-military strategy. We agree that, while we must continue to ensure there is a coordinated military response to the insurgency, that must go hand in hand with development and reconstruction activity, as part of an integrated approach to the challenges faced by Afghanistan.

As we have made clear in this Council on previous occasions, the United Kingdom considers every civilian death in Afghanistan a death too many. As the Secretary-General acknowledges, international forces operating in Afghanistan have made real efforts to minimize civilian casualties in an operating environment in which the enemy forces take no such precautions.

Delivering security is only part of the wider effort on the rule of law. As the report of the Secretary-General highlights, tackling the endemic corruption is a prerequisite for a credible and effective police force. The United Kingdom will continue to support work to tackle that issue, in which the European Union policing mission will play a key role.

We are all aware that the insurgency cannot be defeated by military means alone. The United Kingdom has given substantial support to the Afghan-led "Strengthening Peace" programme. We fully support efforts to bring disaffected Afghans into society's mainstream, provided that they renounce violence and accept Afghanistan's Constitution. We are also supporting community-led solutions to the problem of maintaining local security.

As the partner nation in the counter-narcotics effort, allow me to say a few words about recent developments. The increase in opium cultivation that Mr. Koenigs described is clearly very disappointing. We should also look at the wider picture, however. Where security and the rule of law and good governance — and behind that, diversification of the local economy — exist, we are seeing progress on counter-narcotics. That is particularly evident in the north, and we clearly need to do more, and with more success, in the south of the country.

We agree with the report of the Secretary-General that there are now clear and growing links between the drug trade and the insurgency. We must focus on keeping those separate. Our new package of measures, released on 9 August, includes enhanced interdiction efforts, improving the performance of eradication forces, investigating the scope for new economic incentives and integrating counter-narcotics into our counter-insurgency efforts in the south.

As this is going to be Mr. Koenigs' last appearance before this Council, I would like to join others in expressing our heartfelt thanks for all the work and commitment that he has shown over the last two years. We are very grateful to him.

Finally, I associate myself with the statement to be made shortly by Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Allow me to join other speakers in expressing our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his briefing on the latest developments in Afghanistan.

Since the launch of the Bonn Agreement in 2001, peace and stability have been taking root in Afghanistan. Progress in the political and socio-economic sectors of the country has been notable. Nonetheless, violence threatens to disrupt those attainments. Suicide bombing and violent attacks are increasingly common in Afghanistan. The increase in violent attacks within the country in the past several months, we understand, has undermined confidence in the future and prevented access by the Government and aid organizations to many districts.

My delegation believes that addressing the security challenges is a matter of urgency in order to prevent Afghanistan from sliding back into conflict. In that regard, we recognize the importance of the measures taken by the Afghan National Army, in collaboration with the International Security Assistance Force, in responding to the insurgency activities. We are also encouraged by the efforts to augment the Afghan National Police.

While recognizing the significance of the effective integration of a civilian-military strategy within the security plan for Afghanistan, Indonesia attaches great importance to respect the protection of civilians and the principles of international human

rights and humanitarian laws whenever security operations are carried out in the country.

Indonesia also believes that the military approach cannot fully address the root causes of the re-emergence of the insurgency. We therefore underline the importance of political dialogue and reconciliation involving all factions in Afghanistan. We look forward to further progress in the implementation of the Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice. We hold the view that it is important to help every single Afghan embrace a new Afghanistan. It is important to find ways and means to prevent them from turning to militancy. It is also important to include them in the political, social and economic processes at all levels.

Achieving a secure and stable Afghanistan becomes more daunting with the continued presence of the narco-economy. The sharp increase in opium production in 2007 has exacerbated the security condition in Afghanistan. It poses a grave threat to both reconstruction and nation-building in the country.

Since players in the narco-economy work across borders, cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in counter-narcotics operations is very important. Accordingly, Indonesia welcomes the signing of a trilateral agreement between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan in June 2007. Indonesia also believes that the international community should support the Afghan-led plan to address that problem, going beyond eradication efforts.

As Afghanistan is steadily embracing democracy, the need to strengthen the institutional foundation of the democratic transition in the country remains vital. Additional efforts must be exerted in order to ensure that such institutions as the Anti-Corruption Commission established by President Karzai deliver results.

The key to a robust democracy in Afghanistan is the adoption of the electoral law by the end of 2007. The adoption of such a law by the Afghan Government and the National Assembly will be instrumental to the upcoming cycle of presidential elections in the country. My delegation underlines in that regard the importance of continued support and assistance from the international community for the institutional strengthening and capacity-building of democratic institutions in Afghanistan.

A peaceful and stable environment is important to Afghanistan in order for it to achieve internal sustainability. We welcome in that regard Afghanistan's commitment to contributing to regional security and prosperity through concrete steps, including its accession to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga and the participation of President Karzai in the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The inauguration of a transit bridge between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in August 2007 has both symbolic and substantive meaning.

The continued engagement of the international community with Afghanistan remains vital. Thus Indonesia welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting on Afghanistan in New York on 23 September 2007. My delegation is hopeful that the reaffirmation of support by delegations participating in the meeting will bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not say a few words on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The role of UNAMA becomes more important with the increasing number of challenges to Afghan security and reconstruction efforts. As the Mission's engagement has been reinforced by resolution 1746 (2007), there is in our view an urgent need for ensuring that UNAMA and other international actors engaged in Afghanistan have the mandate and resources needed to fulfil the required tasks and to move the country's development in a positive direction. My delegation wishes to reiterate its full support for UNAMA and its work in Afghanistan.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Koenigs for his efforts and his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and for introducing the report of the Secretary-General.

It is absolutely clear that during the time that has elapsed since the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the country, with the assistance of the international community, has been able to achieve certain successes in State-building. The relevant assessments were made by the participants in the high-level conference on the Afghan problem, which took place in New York in September.

At the same time, however, the situation in Afghanistan remains unstable and, in a number of

areas, tense. This is linked primarily to the continuing increase in terrorist activity by the Taliban, Al-Qaida followers and other extremists, as well as to the lack of a solution to key socio-economic problems.

Of particular concern is the fact that, practically speaking, extremists are in control of a considerable number of regions, and parallel structures of power are being formed in those areas. Moreover, Taliban leaders continue to spread a radical world view incompatible with the country's objectives of democratic development and advocating the continuation of violence in Afghanistan.

In such circumstances, it is necessary to pursue the policy of isolating extremist ringleaders, first and foremost those who are on the sanctions lists of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), while preserving for rank and file Taliban not tarred with the brush of war crimes the possibility of returning to peaceful life. It is precisely that kind of policy which must be followed by the United Nations Mission in the framework of carrying out its mandate.

The diversionary activities of extremists and terrorists are being fuelled by significant financial sources; the principal source continues to be drug trafficking. The major surge in the illegal production of drugs is a source of concern. Anti-drug efforts must be substantially stepped up, both in and around the territory of Afghanistan, through the creation of a comprehensive system comprising an anti-drug and financial security belt, with a coordinating role played by the United Nations and with the participation of neighbouring countries.

More use must be made of the potential of regional organizations, which have proven their effectiveness in working in this area, in particular the Treaty on Collective Security Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). We believe that, in combating the Afghan drug trade, it would be useful to establish constructive cooperation between the CSTO and NATO. Evidence of this is the success of the NATO-Russia Council's pilot project on training counter-narcotics police officers for Afghanistan and countries of Central Asia; this was based at the Russian training centre at Domodedovo.

The recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, held in Bishkek, reaffirmed that organization's broad potential in the implementation of stabilization programmes in Afghanistan, including in the counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics areas. The SCO has significant potential in moving forward peacekeeping initiatives, as reflected in the adoption of Russia's proposal to hold a regional conference on Afghanistan under SCO auspices.

There is still an imperative need for the full implementation of the objectives set out in the London agreement. Maintaining the existing ethnic balance in the organs of State power and administration is also important for consolidating the foundations of internal peace in Afghanistan. The search for possible compromise solutions in this sphere must be carried out by the Afghans themselves, without external pressure.

Military measures alone are insufficient to deal with Afghanistan's problems. At present, there is a need to focus on the revival, under United Nations auspices, of the Afghan economy, which has been virtually destroyed. The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is playing a useful role here. Russia is actively working in this area, participating in the implementation of a number of projects to rebuild Afghan energy and transport infrastructure. Another of our contributions to the stabilization of the country's economic situation is the agreement on the settlement of the Afghan debt to Russia, recently signed in Moscow.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union (EU). I will therefore only add a few remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Koenigs wholeheartedly, not only for his enlightening briefing, but also, more generally, for his outstanding stewardship of the United Nations presence in Afghanistan. Since his appointment almost two years ago, Mr. Koenigs has been able to effectively speak with wisdom and authority, on each and every occasion, on behalf of the Security Council and of the entire international community. It is crucial that we continue to stand united in supporting the Afghan people, rallying behind the impartial and central role of the United Nations. Without the legitimacy provided by the Organization, our commitment would simply be impossible to sustain. The daily sacrifice of military personnel and civilians, Afghan and international alike,

is dignified by our shared goals, which are at the core of the principles on which the Organization is built. Our solidarity goes to all the victims of the senseless violence that Afghanistan is enduring, a violence that has not spared Italian nationals.

The high-level event that was held three weeks ago in this building was a unique opportunity to take stock of the progress made in Afghanistan and to reinvigorate our common commitment to address the outstanding challenges, thereby helping the Afghan people to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous country. The report (S/2007/555) before us, along with the additional briefing given today by the Special Representative, reminds us of the entity of these challenges with remarkable frankness.

As emphasized by our Foreign Minister at the high-level event, coordination is the key word and the only recipe for success in such a complex scenario. This means coordination among donors, coordination between the donor community and the Afghan authorities, coordination between the Government and the international security forces and coordination among the political, economic development and military dimensions of our efforts. That list could be even longer. Sometimes we fall short of our objectives simply because coordination mechanisms are not in place or are not properly used. For that reason, the Compact framework and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board mechanism are essential and must be further consolidated, including through guidance at the political level as necessary.

In the Secretary-General's report, compelling arguments are put forward to define the need for a new, integrated political and military strategy. In our resolutions, we have repeatedly called for greater synergy between the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and between them and the Afghan Government. Such calls must be translated into action to ensure that our military, political and reconstruction efforts make a positive difference in the lives of the Afghan people, rather than the opposite, and that they result in increased public confidence in the legitimate authorities. We fully share the Secretary-General's emphasis on the idea that all of our actions at this crucial juncture should be confidence-oriented and closely coordinated with the Afghan Government. We cannot afford to lose the trust of the Afghan people.

In this regard, we are confident that our efforts to prevent popular alienation will be reinforced by the renewed Afghan commitment to improve governance and the rule of law, particularly at the local level, and to promote national reconciliation within the framework of the Afghan constitution. Such measures become all the more urgent as we approach the 2009 elections.

Here, once again, the United Nations can play a key role, on the basis of the increasingly focused mandate of UNAMA outlined in resolution 1746 (2007). It is, therefore, essential to support the proposal made by the Secretary-General in his report concerning UNAMA's international staff. We believe that Member States could hardly make a better investment. Let me emphasize once again that, in our view, UNAMA must be given all the political support and resources to fulfil its complex mandate in a challenging environment.

The representative of Portugal, speaking on behalf of the presidency of the European Union, will elaborate on the progress made on two issues that, in our view, are the keystones for the sustainability of our efforts, namely, the foundation of functional and professional Afghan security forces and the creation of an environment conducive to regional security. I will only add that Italy will spare no effort to promote further progress in those areas. For example, we are favourably considering the Afghan request to support the organization in Herat, later this month, of the ministerial conference of the Economic Cooperation Organization. More generally, we pay tribute to all actors contributing to those endeavours. We are proud that, through the European Union Police Mission, the Union is actively engaged in the police reform process.

Let me conclude by expressing to our Afghan friends our regret over the sudden interruption, a few days ago, of the de facto moratorium on executions in Afghanistan. Our absolute opposition to the death penalty is very well known and has not wavered in the least by the fact that Italian nationals were among the victims of the crimes of which one of the executed was convicted. A moratorium is particularly important in those cases where further progress is still needed in the reform of law enforcement agencies and the judicial sector.

Finally, I would take like to take this opportunity to reiterate that Italy remains fully committed to

helping Afghan authorities to build a professional, accountable and effective justice system in line with the highest international standards. I am glad to report that we are working hard, together with our Afghan and international partners, to ensure the full and timely implementation of the successful outcomes of the Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan, which was held in July.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

We would like to thank the Special Representative for his comprehensive and in-depth assessment of the current situation in Afghanistan. We once again wish to commend the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), bilateral donors and all others working with the Government of Afghanistan to stabilize the country and improve the well-being of its people. In that connection, we welcome the steady progress made towards economic revival and the development of infrastructure, as well as the reform of key sectors such as law enforcement, the judiciary, education, health and local government. With determined leadership committed to change coupled with sustained and well-coordinated international support, the people of Afghanistan will realize their democratic and cultural aspirations in a modernized State.

At the same time, we acknowledge that they currently face formidable challenges stemming from weak institutions of governance and the pervading violence and lawlessness resulting from the insurgency, in particular in the southern and eastern parts of the country. In that connection, the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/555) contains a number of concrete recommendations that my delegation believes deserve careful consideration. Although the support of the international community is crucial, it is equally essential that the leadership of Afghanistan makes effective use of all available opportunities to strengthen the rule of law, promote human rights and alleviate the humanitarian crisis, thereby strengthening the integrity of the State.

We agree that the Government must be resolute in purging from the security, law enforcement and judiciary services those elements whose activities tend to erode public confidence in the Government. My delegation regards as most worrying the finding that some law enforcement agents, politicians and public officials are colluding with narcotraffickers to obstruct justice, thereby promoting impunity. Afghanistan is threatened by a vicious circle in which the very State institutions responsible for deterring and suppressing crime are providing the enabling environment for crime to flourish. If unchecked, that development could reverse the gains that have been made by NATO and ISAF and hinder progress in stabilizing the remaining parts of the country.

Additionally, the problematic security situation is also contributing to widespread human rights abuses, including violence against women in prisons, not to mention the denial of humanitarian relief to needy segments of the population. As is pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, the security sector problem goes beyond capacity building and the shortage of personnel; it is also a function of the strength of the determination of the leadership to confront those forces that thrive best in a climate of violence and lawlessness.

In the light of the foregoing, the marked improvement in relations between Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours — especially India and Pakistan — is a positive development that has the potential to change the dynamics of the security situation in the country, and indeed in the entire region, for the better. We urge the Government of Afghanistan to speed up the reform of the security sector so that it can take full advantage of the new momentum for cooperation with its neighbours.

While my delegation fully appreciates the constraints facing the Government, we are concerned nonetheless that the status quo has implications far beyond the country. In those circumstances, we believe that a conscious effort must be made in the next phase of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy to empower Afghan civil society to complement the efforts of both the Government and the international community. An enhanced role for UNAMA, coupled with additional human and material resources, would be a step in the right direction.

I now resume my functions as the President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Afghanistan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the

presidency of the Council for the month of October. I also wish to express our appreciation for the convening of today's important meeting. We are grateful to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his detailed briefing. I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2007/555) on Afghanistan, which offers a comprehensive overview of the overall situation in the country.

Less than a month ago, we gathered at a special high-level meeting on Afghanistan that was co-hosted by the Secretary-General and President Karzai and was held prior to the General Assembly's general debate at its sixty-second session. The meeting, which brought together foreign ministers and senior representatives of the 22 States members of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) of the Afghanistan Compact and various international organizations, was another opportunity to assess ways of enhancing greater coordination of international efforts to strengthen peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. We were pleased with the outcome of the meeting, which attested to the overwhelming consensus among Member States on the need to keep Afghanistan among the top priorities of the international community and the United Nations. We would also like to welcome the unity with which participants reiterated the need for improved strategic coordination in four key areas, namely, security, counter-narcotics, regional cooperation and governance. Such coordination will be fundamental to achieving the vision of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

Significant gains have been made in Afghanistan since the signing of the Bonn Agreement, six years ago. Thanks to the support of the Council and other partners in the international community, Afghanistan no longer serves as a base for international terrorists; rather, it has become the frontline from which countries have joined hands in the fight against terrorism. We have regained our legitimacy among responsible members of the international community. We are continuing to make steady progress in consolidating our democratic institutions.

At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that daunting challenges continue to confront a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. That is why we continue to focus on defeating terrorism and improving security, strengthening the rule of law and governance, enhancing the reconstruction process, and eliminating the menace of narcotics as our top priorities.

Terrorism is the main challenge facing us. Recent events of the past two weeks are a clear illustration of the ongoing campaign by the enemies of peace in Afghanistan that is aimed at destabilizing the situation. In their most recent acts of sheer brutality, terrorists carried out suicide bombings in the frontier town of Spin Buldak and in the Afghan capital, targeting civilians and members of the National Army and Police. At least 80 civilians lost their lives in suicide attacks in September. The carnage was a stark reminder of the continuing challenge facing the people of Afghanistan as they seek to live in peace and security. Additional attacks have come in the form of increased use of sophisticated explosive devices, abductions and intimidation, and daily attacks on schools and health centres, and on Government officials and humanitarian aid workers. Terrorists have also resorted to the brutal tactic of using human shields during counter-terrorism operations, which constitutes the main cause of loss of civilian lives.

I should like to reaffirm here that such heinous acts will in no way weaken our resolve to achieve our stated goals. That is why our security forces continue to serve in the most difficult of conditions alongside forces of our international partners in order to consolidate security throughout the country and stop the explosion of violence.

Over recent months, we have made substantial progress in weakening the command and control structure of the terrorist networks in Afghanistan. Joint combat operations by Afghan and international forces resulted in the capture and elimination of an unprecedented number of commanders of the Taliban and extremists. As a case in point, the deaths of Mullah Akhter Osmani and Mullah Dahdullah at the beginning of this year were among numerous achievements in the fight against terrorism. In this regard, we remain concerned over the increased use of foreign extremist elements in the campaign of terror against our people.

We have also taken action to strengthen the sanctions regime against terrorists, in accordance with resolution 1267 (1999). Just last month, Sayeedur Rahman Haqani, the mastermind behind numerous suicide bombings in various parts of the country, was listed on the consolidated list of the 1267 Committee at the request of the Afghan Government.

Improving overall security in Afghanistan is dependent on a variety of factors. Ensuring a fully efficient and operational National Army and Police is vital to our fight against terrorism. Despite substantial progress in reforming our security institutions and increasing the size of our National Army and Police, we call for continued assistance in strengthening and enhancing the training of our security forces.

Meanwhile, it has also become evident that addressing terrorism and improving security in Afghanistan will not be achieved by military means alone. While the military campaign remains an important pillar in the fight against terrorism, we must also redouble our efforts on all aspects of a comprehensive strategy to achieve long-term security and stability. We must focus more on expediting the delivery of basic services and creating employment opportunities through large scale reconstruction and development projects, in order to bring about real change in the lives of our citizens. In doing so, we will prevent the possibility of subversive elements enjoying local sympathy. In this regard, we call upon on our international partners to ensure greater military coordination with Afghan security forces during combat operations in order to prevent the loss of civilian lives during counter-terrorism operations. All measures must be implemented to avoid harm to civilians during armed hostilities.

Furthermore, more must be done to address terrorism in its regional and international dimensions. The presence of terrorist infrastructure outside of Afghanistan's territory is a source of continuing concern to Afghanistan and the region. In the printed version of his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, President Karzai emphasized

> "that we were the prime victim of terrorism and that terrorism was never, nor is it today, a home-grown phenomenon in Afghanistan. Therefore, this threat can only be overcome if addressed across its regional and international dimensions. Consistent with our belief as expressed in the past, we remain convinced that tolerating the presence of sanctuaries and terrorist infrastructure will only broaden the scope of terrorism".

As part of the initiatives to ensure long-term stability, Afghanistan continues to focus on reconciliation as a measure to encourage non-terrorist Taliban to refrain from subversive activities and join the process of building a prosperous Afghanistan. Such measures, which take place within the framework of national reconciliation, are welcomed by our people. In this regard, we are working with the 1267 Committee to update and improve the quality of the consolidated list.

Regional cooperation is indispensable for success in our efforts to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan. There is a greater consensus in our neighbourhood on the notion that the advent of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is a precondition for the security and prosperity of all countries in the region. This year we maximized our efforts to consolidate relations with our neighbours and the wider region in the areas of security, trade, investment, border cooperation and counter-narcotics. The convening of the sixth meeting of the Joint Coordination Body (JCB) in Kabul on 3 October was an important step in that regard.

As a country that once served as a land bridge connecting cultures, countries and civilizations, Afghanistan is surely but gradually reassuming its role in promoting trade and development in the region. In that regard, I am pleased to announce that we are preparing to host the upcoming international meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of members of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the city of Herat on 19 October. This meeting will be the first international gathering to be held in one of Afghanistan's historic provinces.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan jirga that took place just over a month ago was the most recent among numerous meetings initiated by Afghanistan to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in order to jointly address the threat of terrorism in Afghanistan and throughout the region. We have every reason to believe that that assembly will yield the anticipated results. We also look forward to the second session of the jirga to be held in Pakistan in the near future.

Another major challenge is narcotics. Why this menace remains of concern to Afghanistan and the international community can been attributed to a combination of factors. It has become evident that eliminating the scourge of narcotics from our society and the region is an endeavour unattainable by Afghanistan alone. Real progress towards reduction

and elimination requires a more robust effort from the transit and consumer countries. Greater focus should also be given to breaking the link between the production and trafficking of illegal drugs and the financing of terrorist activities.

In adopting the Afghanistan Compact, we committed ourselves to a second phase of cooperation with our international partners in order to consolidate our achievements. Now that we have reached a turning point in the effort to achieve a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, the time has come for us to intensify our focus on the implementation of the Compact. Additional measures are necessary if we are to ensure that the goals of the Compact are met within the designated timelines.

In that context, we acknowledge the need to exert greater efforts to improve the effectiveness, accountability and utilization of development assistance. While expressing gratitude to our international partners for their assistance to Afghanistan, we emphasize the need to ensure delivery of pledges in a timely manner. Also essential is the need for increased financial assistance in achieving our development goals.

If we are to accomplish tangible results across key pillars of the Compact, we must ensure greater coordination of international assistance to Afghanistan. We call on our international partners to increase the level of coordination and cooperation among themselves and with the Afghan Government. Enhanced coordination will result in greater unity of assessment, unity of approach and unity of action. In that regard, we commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for its continuing commitment to implement the effective coordination of the international community's efforts with Afghanistan.

We are also grateful to the Council for its adoption of resolution 1776 (2007), extending the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force for an additional year. In that regard, allow me to express our appreciation to all of those countries that have committed troops and resources to ISAF for the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan greatly values the ongoing role of the United Nations and the efforts to secure peace and stability in the country. We welcome the expansion of the presence of UNAMA to additional areas of the country as a clear sign of United Nations efforts to reach out to various parts of the country. I also wish to seize this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal engagement and commitment to improve the situation in Afghanistan, as illustrated by his visit to Kabul in June and by his initiative to convene the high-level meeting on Afghanistan on 23 September.

I would like to express my country's gratitude to our international partners for their ongoing commitment to Afghanistan. We remain confident that together we will fulfil our commitment, our common vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to pay special tribute to Mr. Tom Koenigs for his tireless efforts during his tenure in Afghanistan as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Portugal, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): For the sake of efficiency and in order to save time, I will shorten my oral statement today. The full text has been distributed.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

With the support of the international community, Afghanistan has achieved significant progress in recent years. This was also confirmed on the occasion of the recent high-level meeting held at the United Nations on 23 September. But serious challenges remain threatening to undermine the achievements to date.

We share the concern of the Secretary-General about the many issues that present challenges to the short- and long-term security and stability of Afghanistan that have not yet been resolved. In his earlier reports to the Council, the Secretary-General expressed concern at the increasing trends in violence and challenges to State authority.

We recognize the central role played by the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan by leading the efforts of the international community and thus contributing to Afghanistan not being alone as it faces its current manifold challenges. In that context, we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1776 (2007) on 19 September, which renewed the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and resolution 1746 (2007) on 23 March 2007, which extended the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate. We would like to take this opportunity to commend UNAMA under the excellent leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs.

The International Security Assistance Force led by NATO since August 2003 has been crucial in improving security, initially in Kabul and later through its programme of phased expansion in the north, west, south and east of the country. To that effect we recognize the importance of increasing the effective functionality, professionalism and accountability of the Afghan security sector to provide long-term solutions to security in Afghanistan.

The European Union expresses its concern with the intensified Taliban-led insurgency. Taliban and insurgent groups continue to prevent full security in a number of areas, while rates of insurgent and terrorism violence are higher than in 2006 and criminal and drug gangs continue to grow. We are deeply concerned with the expansion of opium poppy cultivation by 17 per cent and potential opium production by 34 per cent. The unprecedented increase of opium production in 2007 poses a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building in Afghanistan.

In that context, it is crucial for Afghanistan to have a viable police force. We, the European Union, have been accelerating efforts to that end through launching the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) this past June. The European police mission is working towards an Afghan police force that respects human rights and operates within the framework of the rule of law. Moreover, the mission is addressing issues of police reform at the central, regional and provincial levels in close coordination with its partners.

At the same time, we must not overlook the fact that some important steps have been taken. At the regional level, the European Union positively notes the more collaborative atmosphere that has begun to prevail in Afghan-Pakistani relations, with the recognition that terrorism was a shared challenge. Therefore, we congratulate the peace jirga that took place in Kabul between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf in August 2007, and the joint declaration that resulted from that event. Peace, security and stability in Afghanistan cannot be achieved without the positive support of the countries in the region.

Afghan commitment on good governance is needed. Only by appointing qualified Government officials with a good human rights record, providing enough provincial government capacity and implementing the anti-corruption road map can an effective and legitimate administration can be realized. The adoption of such measures becomes all the more urgent as we approach the 2009 elections.

It is with deep regret that the European Union has learned of the recent execution of 15 people. The European Union opposes the death penalty in all cases. We urge the Government of Afghanistan to reinstate the moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it.

Finally, we stress the importance of urgent attention by both the Afghan Government and the National Assembly to ensuring adoption of the electoral law by the end of 2007, which is vital to prepare the presidential elections that will take place in 2009.

Let me conclude this statement by stressing that the European Union remains committed to the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan. We continue to support the Afghanistan Compact, which we consider the principal framework for the future reconstruction and stabilization of the Country until 2010. Therefore, we pledge to continue to work with the Afghan Government, the United Nations and other international partners to build a prosperous, secure and sustainable Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada welcomes this opportunity to address the Council on Afghanistan, a country that remains a central priority for the international community, including for Canada. We also welcome the Secretary-General's September report

(S/2007/555) on the situation in Afghanistan and Mr. Koenigs' very helpful presentation today.

Canada was pleased with the outcomes of the high-level meeting in New York on September 23. The meeting demonstrated the strength of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan, but also revealed the need for additional work in three key areas: a need for renewed focus on the Afghan National Police; better donor coordination; and greater Afghanization of the international community's actions.

Today the Government of Canada would like to recognize the gains that have been made in Afghanistan over the past year, and also to identify outstanding obstacles and emerging challenges to the international reconstruction effort.

With respect to the security situation, Canada applauds the increasing effectiveness of the Afghan National Army to bring stability to the lives of Afghans. The security situation of course remains challenging, but we are beginning to see real progress in key areas.

In Kandahar, for example, where Canadian troops are stationed, the Taliban have been dislodged from former strongholds such as Kandahar City and Panjwayi District. No one is benefiting more from these gains than the people of Kandahar Province. They are increasingly able to reclaim their lives and build a better future for their children and grandchildren.

Tangible progress is being achieved across the country. For example, 4,000 new hospitals have been built since 2004; access to basic health care has grown from 9 per cent in 2004 to 83 per cent this year; 1.2 billion square metres of land have been cleared of mines since 1989; infant mortality rates have dropped 22 per cent since 2000; 40,000 more Afghan newborns now survive their first year; 6,000 kilometres of road are being built or refurbished nationwide.

These statistics are telling. Every Afghan child inoculated against polio is a child who will live a longer, happier life. Every kilometre of road represents better access to markets, schools or relatives in neighbouring districts. Every mine-free metre of land is another area where Afghan children can play football or run freely. These achievements contribute to the vision of the future of the Afghanistan Compact.

To succeed, international efforts must be mirrored by the consistent commitment of the Afghan Government. Corruption must be squarely confronted. Making active the senior appointments panel, a key Compact benchmark, would demonstrate the Government of Afghanistan's commitment to anti-corruption. I should note that Canada remains committed to working with the Government of Afghanistan to make the panel operational. We will continue to work with the Government of Afghanistan and our partners in the international community to consolidate the rule of law, an essential condition for sustainable development, lasting peace and stability.

A robust police force is also a critical element of the rule of law. In this regard, Canada currently provides training, infrastructure and salary support. We look forward to continuing to support the Government of Afghanistan as it develops a comprehensive approach to the establishment of an effective Afghan National Police force. Canada also remains committed to working closely with European partners in the European Union Police Mission.

The Government of Afghanistan should be commended for its progress on developing a national justice system strategy. We were pleased to be part of this process and look forward to finalizing the Strategy, under Afghan leadership.

Canada applauds the recent establishment of the independent department of local administrations. We remain committed to help the Afghan Government develop the capacity of subnational governance institutions.

The Government of Afghanistan's opposition to legalizing opium production needs our support. The issue is complex and multifaceted. Recently reported progress in the northern and central provinces is encouraging, but we must redouble efforts to assist the Afghan Government in combating the narcotics industry in the south. This requires a comprehensive approach, including the consolidation of an effective justice system and the provision of sustained economic opportunities. Canada remains committed to supporting the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to address the threat of narcotics.

A securely managed border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is of course critical. Canada welcomes the positive outcome of the cross-border peace jirga in

August. We must build on the momentum the jirga has generated.

Canada is pleased to be working with the Government of Afghanistan and in support of the work of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Group of 8 (G8) to foster Afghan-Pakistani cooperation in security and economic development, and to help develop Afghan capacity in border management.

(*spoke in French*)

The situation in Afghanistan clearly demonstrates the need to address the security, development and governance elements of reconstruction simultaneously. It is imperative that the United Nations and the international community get this right, not just for the people of Afghanistan, who deserve a better future, but also for global stability and prosperity.

Achieving our goals in Afghanistan will require the collective effort, imagination and innovative thinking of everyone involved in the international reconstruction effort. To this end, Canada compliments UNAMA on recent efforts to enhance collaboration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the World Bank and other key actors in the Afghan reconstruction effort. We encourage the United Nations and Member States to continue to identify new ways to maximize the impact of our collective efforts in Afghanistan.

Canada strongly supports the work of UNAMA and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenigs. We would like to thank him and his team for the important work they are undertaking in often very difficult circumstances. We welcome and strongly support UNAMA's request for increased international positions in 2008, particularly in the south.

Earlier this month, when Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed the General Assembly, Canada proposed the establishment of a high-level United Nations special envoy for Afghanistan as part of Canada's continued support for, and commitment to the leadership role of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

To conclude, Canada remains committed to supporting UNAMA and the broader United Nations family in their efforts to ensure the success of the reconstruction operation in Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. De Klerk (Netherlands): My delegation is grateful for this opportunity to take the floor in this important debate and to add a few remarks to the statement made by Portugal, the current European Union President, regarding the Netherlands' commitment to peace, security and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

The excellent and comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/555) demonstrates the complexity of the problems that Afghanistan and the international community are facing. Thanks to the continuing support of the international community, the Government of Afghanistan is increasing its capacity and its effectiveness. Millions of refugees have returned; millions of children, including girls, now go to school; and the majority of Afghans have access to basic health services. Although many challenges remain, there is no reason for an attitude of doom and gloom.

The Council rightly underscores the synergy in objectives between the United Nations and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF has settled in all over the country and has shown that it can deliver basic security within the Afghan development zones. That is also what the Netherlands, with 1,800 troops, and Australia have shown in Uruzgan. In the troubled southern provinces, the Taliban is under pressure, although the threat of asymmetrical attacks has not subsided.

The ISAF mission is a state-of-the-art stabilization mission, one in which human security and the creation of an environment conducive to better Government and socio-economic development are central points. We are gaining valuable experience in Afghanistan that can be put to use in other fragile or failed States. ISAF is an Assistance Force, providing security and stability so that the legitimate Afghan Government, in cooperation with international organizations and other civilian development actors, can succeed.

ISAF is no reconstruction entity. The Netherlands would like to see more complementarity among the United Nations, NATO and the European Union (EU). We are very pleased that the EU has started a police mission in Afghanistan. We will continue to encourage the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

(UNAMA) to open offices, as a matter of priority, in all southern provinces. In our view, the United Nations as a whole needs a much stronger engagement in the civilian area.

All of us are in Afghanistan because we have a clear-cut security interest in being there and because of our responsibility to the Afghan people. But those are not the only reasons. Afghanistan is one of the poorest nations on Earth. By investing in development in Afghanistan, the international community is working towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in one of the most difficult environments possible.

The security situation and the lack of capacity on the part of both the Government and non-governmental organizations are hampering development plans and programmes. Capacity-building needs our immediate attention. Capacity can be built only by working through Afghan national programmes. We ask the national Government to actively promote the rollout of national programmes in the provinces, even difficult ones such as Uruzgan.

The urgent challenge right now is to bring better governance to the people of Afghanistan, including in the more far-flung provinces. Today, we should, as a matter of priority, focus our efforts on the growing discontent among the Afghan population. People are growing impatient; they want central and provincial government to offer the basic services that they have been promised since 2002.

I should now like to say a word on counter-narcotics efforts. This is an area where many of the problems that plague Afghanistan — a lack of effective governance, corruption, the influence of power brokers and the insurgents — come together. There are no easy solutions. We need patience and a long-term commitment to poverty reduction — more specifically, rural development. Only an integrated approach can help us.

The Afghan counter-narcotics strategy has all the necessary elements; we need to insist on its correct implementation. Our experience in Uruzgan has taught us that, although eradication is an integral part of the strategy, eradication should not be carried out in isolation but should be preceded by the provision of viable alternatives. And even though eradication can be an option, spraying is not, in our view: we believe that it is too indiscriminate and that it carries too many health risks.

Finally, I should like to say a word about staying power. The Netherlands strongly believes that the international community must commit to Afghanistan for the long haul. We maintained a military presence in Bosnia for 15 years. International solidarity, our own national security and a moral obligation to the Afghan people warrant a continued multilateral presence in Afghanistan. The debate in the Netherlands on prolonging our stay in Uruzgan is, however, not yet finalized. In that context, the Netherlands calls upon United Nations Member States to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources to ISAF, particularly for deployment in the troubled southern provinces.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I join previous speakers in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenigs, for his comprehensive and informative briefing.

Since the last debate on this topic in the Security Council, in March this year (see S/PV.5641), we have been encouraged by certain progress made in Afghanistan. In the area of economic development, positive economic figures have been reported and the finalization of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy is under way. Regional initiatives, including the convening of the peace jirga in August, have contributed to the process of establishing peace and security in the region.

Those positive signs of progress notwithstanding, the challenges facing Afghanistan are enormous, and problems related to security, narcotics and corruption have yet to be overcome. Sustained and coordinated international efforts to assist the country are essential. I take this opportunity to reaffirm Japan's unwavering commitment to supporting Afghanistan in its efforts to stabilize and reconstruct the nation.

I would also like to underscore the central role that the United Nations has been playing in coordinating international efforts to address these and other challenges. Japan commends the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and its staff, who are operating under very difficult conditions. In particular, I would like to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Koenigs for his

service and his dedication to the fulfilment of the indispensable role of the United Nations.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains a source of deep concern. In particular, we are seriously concerned about the increasing number of abduction cases and suicide attacks. Among the various efforts to improve the security situation, security sector reform has a key role to play. We support the efforts of President Karzai and his Government in that area and look forward to further initiatives and achievements in the future. As regards the disbandment of illegal and armed groups (DIAG) process, in which Japan is acting as lead country, I was encouraged by a recent report from the embassy in Kabul that over the past year momentum has been regained and progress achieved in the areas of both policy and operations. At the same time, I must emphasize that, in order for further progress to be made, it is essential to carry out the recommendations put forth at the conference held in Tokyo in June this year, including improving the coordination between DIAG and other areas of security-sector reform, such as police reform.

In addressing the threat posed by terrorists in Afghanistan, sustained international efforts are needed to supplement the efforts of the Afghan Government itself. Security Council resolution 1776 (2007) stresses the necessity of such international efforts, including those of the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition. We welcome the position taken by the Council. Japan is determined to continue its supply operations to vessels conducting maritime interdiction operations. Shortly, the Government of Japan intends to submit to the Diet for its approval a bill providing the legal basis for continuing its maritime supply operations in the Indian Ocean.

Japan shares the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/555) over the linkage between the increasingly critical narcotics issue and reconstruction and nation-building. Counter-narcotics actions must be strengthened, together with capacity-building, in the months to come. As part of its integrated approach to addressing issues such as poverty, security and narcotics, Japan has promoted comprehensive rural development, with efforts to develop agriculture and rural communities at its core.

Japan has a strong interest in human resources development and has provided technical cooperation for the training of teachers and the reconstruction of more than 300 schools. We intend to further expand our assistance to support the national education strategic plan in areas such as literacy education and the building of schools. To date, we have implemented assistance amounting to $1.24 billion and we will implement the remaining $210 million of the amount pledged at the London Conference, with particular focus on improvement of the security situation and advancing economic development.

The Secretary-General reports that UNAMA will focus on consolidating its presence, while expanding its international staff. In light of the current security conditions, we support this direction as a reasonable one. Japan takes note of the suggestion recently made by some Member States of appointing a new United Nations special envoy. We look forward to a more detailed, concrete proposal to that effect. At the same time, we reaffirm that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has played a central role in the coordination of the international efforts for Afghanistan.

Japan will chair the G8 in 2008, succeeding Germany. The issues of Afghanistan will be one of the major topics to be discussed at G8 meetings. In keeping with our steadfast commitment to Afghanistan, Japan will also host a meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in Japan next year. Japan will continue its close cooperation with the United Nations aimed at achieving a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): May I begin by congratulating you for assuming the Council's presidency this month and thank you for having convened this timely and important meeting. Our thanks also go to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Koenigs, as well as to their colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for their tireless and dedicated efforts in Afghanistan. We wish Mr. Koenigs success in his future endeavours.

We have carefully studied the latest report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan and have taken note of various important issues contained therein. Undoubtedly, the people and the Government of Afghanistan, under the wise and dedicated leadership

of President Karzai, have made tremendous efforts and great progress in their journey towards peace, security and development in the past several years. The report before us well indicates the encouraging efforts and valuable accomplishments made by Afghanistan in various fields such as economic growth, education, health, the building of roads and rural development. We commend the Afghans for these remarkable achievements, which have been attained despite the immensely difficult situation in the country.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, Afghanistan is still suffering from various daunting challenges, including the increasing insecurity and terrorist activities by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, drug-traffickers, illegal armed groups and criminals. According to the Secretary General's report, rates of terrorist violence this year are at least 20 per cent higher than in 2006, and insecurity has hindered the establishment of the rule of law, the provision of basic services to the Afghan people and the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are of the view that, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, a key to addressing the insecurity in Afghanistan and sustaining the security gains in the country in the long term, is to increase the capability, autonomy and integrity of the Afghan National Security Forces, especially the Afghan National Police and the Army. Clearly, providing home-grown security and delegating the security responsibilities to Afghan security forces are of paramount importance and can help address the insecurity, which is, unfortunately, so prevalent in certain parts of the country today.

Also, certain important steps, such as allocating the amount of money that is expended for the presence of foreign forces to the reconstruction of infrastructure and capacity-building in Afghanistan and utilizing regional potential for the reconstruction of the country, can equally contribute to the improvement of the general situation in Afghanistan. Here, I would like to support the statement made by the Ambassador of Afghanistan that financial assistance to the Government of Afghanistan would enable it to deliver social services, education, health and poverty-alleviation in the country and is vital in combating terrorism and drug-trafficking. I would also like to emphasize that the international financial institutions should provide adequate financial and technical assistance for such purposes.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a nation afflicted by the Taliban's heinous terrorism, has always strongly condemned that group's terrorist acts. Besides the Taliban's carnage committed against Iranian diplomats and journalists in 1998, shocking the whole world, the international community has witnessed, even as recently as in the past few months, terrorists, mostly those affiliated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida, infiltrating into Iran's eastern parts, killing innocent civilians and law enforcement personnel and, in some cases, abducting foreign tourists. We, therefore, have a vital interest in a stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan and in an Afghanistan free from terrorism and extremism.

By the same token, we reject certain efforts to appease the Taliban terrorists. Foreign forces will ultimately leave Afghanistan, but the impact of their misled policies in this area will remain there, afflicting the Afghans and the region long after they leave the country. The fact that during the past two years terrorists have seemed more emboldened in their crimes in Afghanistan indicates that, in combating terrorism and insecurity in that country, contacts with those responsible for insecurity and terrorist activities could be wrongly interpreted as rewarding terrorists and criminals and will prove counterproductive and dangerous for Afghanistan, for the region and for the whole international community.

Undoubtedly, the narcotics problem is one of the most serious challenges in Afghanistan, with consequences that go far beyond the borders of that country. The increase in poppy cultivation and heroin production in Afghanistan has hindered the advancement of the country towards development and has put the security of Afghanistan, along with that of the region and beyond, in danger. Moreover, narcotics, as the source of finance for terrorism, have contributed to supporting terrorists, extremists and illegal groups that are attempting to destabilize the Afghan Government. Narcotics have encouraged alliances of convenience between narco-interests and terrorists. As stressed by all of us at the recent high-level meeting on Afghanistan in New York, breaking this link is vital to creating a stable, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

According to the annual survey of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, poppy cultivation increased by 17 per cent in 2007 and opium production by as much as 34 per cent. That increase and the

rampant drug trafficking indicate that the preventive and countering measures have not yielded the expected results and that the international community has, unfortunately, so far failed to curb this menace. It also confirms the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report that the implementation of the national drug control strategy in Afghanistan has, unfortunately, been unsatisfactory. To counter that menace, a more resolute approach by the international community — particularly those foreign forces in the country that have been entrusted with certain responsibilities in that regard — and more serious and concerted efforts by the Afghan authorities are essential.

On its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fought a costly war against drug traffickers. We are fighting that enormous threat with utmost seriousness and determination so that our own people, the people of the region and those living thousands of miles away in Europe and elsewhere will not be affected by the scourge of narcotic drugs. We have fought that war almost single-handedly and have lost about 4,000 of our great and brave law enforcement personnel, who have sacrificed their lives on behalf of the whole international community. Iran has also engaged in trilateral agreements and regional arrangements with regard to joint border operations and information-sharing in that regard.

To the knowledge of all, Iran has been one of the most serious and sincere supporters of the Afghan nation and Government over the past several years as they have endeavoured to develop their democratic institutions, to establish their constitution, to rebuild their country's infrastructure and, in sum, to build a new stable, secure, developed and prosperous Afghanistan. We have been firm and unwavering in our support for President Karzai and his Government, and continue to be so. That was recently underlined by President Karzai. As I mentioned before, we strongly believe that a secure and developed Afghanistan that is free from terrorism and extremism is essential for the security and stability of the region and for our own country's security.

Our nation has openheartedly embraced millions of its Afghan brothers and sisters as refugees for almost three decades, despite the huge burdens and certain other difficulties that the refugee issue has created for our country. Also, Iran was among the first countries to make its sincere contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction after the collapse of the Taliban. We actively participated in the Tokyo conference and made a pledge of $560 million, which is the largest pledge in terms of the per capita income of donor countries. In that regard, our country has thus far granted about $300 million to Afghanistan for the implementation of various important projects in the areas of infrastructure, technical and educational services, and financial and in-kind assistance. We have also allocated almost the same amount to a line of credit for the reconstruction of the country. Moreover, we have just started our second phase of development assistance to Afghanistan, amounting to $50 million at a demanding time, while several important agreements, including a general agreement on bilateral cooperation and on capacity-building of Afghan ministries, were also signed between the two countries during our President's visit to Kabul in August 2007.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate that we commend and fully support the central role played by the United Nations in Afghanistan and the continuation of that essential role in leading the international community's efforts in the reconstruction process of that country.

The President: I call on the representative of India.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation, Sir, for your successful stewardship of the Security Council over the past fortnight. Let me also express my appreciation of the dedication shown by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenigs, and wish him all the very best for the future.

Today's debate on Afghanistan is most opportune, taking place a fortnight after the high-level meeting chaired by the Secretary-General and President Karzai. Like that occasion, today's meeting affords us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. As the Minister of External Affairs of India noted two weeks ago, India is fully committed to implementing the benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact and to addressing the interrelated security, political and development challenges facing Afghanistan.

The central task in Afghanistan involves addressing, in the face of insecurity created by vicious terrorist violence, the socio-economic challenges that are the result of decades of strife, destruction and privation. The challenge before the international

community is, on the one hand, to ensure security while helping resolve those problems, while on the other, to transform our respective high-level political commitments into operational strategies and concrete outcomes on the ground. Only if we succeed in all three tasks can we create the conditions that engender greater national ownership of security, reconstruction and development processes in the long term.

It is an unavoidable reality that it is only in the long term that we can rebuild national institutions destroyed over the decades. Therefore, our collective goal must be to build upon the significant successes recorded thus far, while recognizing the fact that the road ahead is long. We must redouble our political and economic commitment to helping Afghanistan over the medium to long term and ensure that our determination is unshaken by short-term developments. The resolve displayed by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in that context, in expanding its presence to 17 offices, is commendable. We look forward to further expansion as and when capacities are created.

In that context, no challenge is more of a test of our collective resolve than that posed by the security situation. It is also the threat that could most quickly undermine our collective efforts in Afghanistan. Therefore, we cannot and must not underestimate the ferocity of the Taliban and Al-Qaida resurgence. India fully appreciates the Government of Afghanistan's position that the challenge of terrorism — in particular the growing trend of suicide attacks, cross-border infiltration, and the nexus between terrorism and drug trafficking — requires a robust international political solution and a stronger domestic military response.

At the same time, as our Minister underscored, security challenges must be addressed realistically. That is to say, we in the international community must provide appropriate responses, including security enforcement and economic and development strategies that rapidly bring the benefits of governance and development to people in the worst-affected districts. We can ill afford partial solutions that provide only temporary relief in limited areas. Terrorism cannot be fought piecemeal.

With regard to the interrelated aspect of addressing the development challenge, India believes that the good work being undertaken by the international community in Afghanistan can be sustained in the long term only if we invest in developing Afghan human resources. For that, a multi-pronged approach is required; on the one hand, we must invest in rebuilding infrastructure and generating employment, and on the other, we must progressively transfer the necessary skills and managerial authority to the Afghan people so that they can take on the ownership of those projects.

For our part, I must underline that India's commitment to the rebuilding and development of Afghanistan remains unflinching. Our assistance programme, which has been in place since the Berlin conference, has now reached $750 million. Of that total pledge, India has already disbursed around $300 million in the implementation of various assistance projects since 2002. Our projects run the gamut of activities, ranging from capacity-building projects to infrastructure creation and reconstruction.

With regard to capacity-building, India has trained more than 2,700 Afghan citizens in India. Since 2006, we have trained, annually, 500 Afghan public officials in short-term courses and 500 Afghan students in university-level courses in India. India is also implementing a capacity-development programme in public administration, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, to depute 30 Indian civil servants to assist in various Afghan ministries. In addition, India is including a strong capacity-development component in all its infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

As regards projects, apart from the completion of ongoing mega-infrastructure projects, India is now simultaneously focusing on small development projects. These include activities that require the participation of local communities. Such projects are aimed at providing the most direct peace dividend to communities that have yet to see the benefits of development. India has worked to align its assistance programmes with Afghan priorities. Our projects are being implemented in close coordination with Afghan stakeholders, focusing particularly on local implementation, management and ownership of assets.

As a country with traditionally close historic, cultural and regional links with Afghanistan, it is natural for us to see regional cooperation as the third pillar of the effort to stabilize Afghanistan. Regional economic cooperation is an important benchmark of the Compact and is a strategic element of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

Afghanistan's entry into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in April 2007 will not only further strengthen its historical links with the South Asian region, but also provide the region with lasting benefits in free trade and shared economic activities. In that context, several important regional cooperation events have taken place over the past few years, including the Kabul Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and the New Delhi Regional Economic Cooperation Conference.

However, the central challenge remains the need to develop coordinated measures to implement the programmes formulated in such regional processes. Those include addressing key and topical challenges, such as cross-border terrorism, the upgrading of law enforcement and governance capacities, the facilitation of overland transit and the expansion of trade and business linkages.

In conclusion, at the macro level, our best response to those who seek to drive the international community out of Afghanistan is to display a heightened sense of resolve. We can only succeed by showing that our commitment is long-term and that our resolve is unshaken. Most important, we must work together in a more effective partnership with the Government of Afghanistan. As the latest report of the Secretary-General underlines, strong leadership from the Afghan Government must be matched by greater donor coherence and a strong commitment from all of us in the neighbourhood. That remains the key to collectively building upon the gains made since the Bonn conference.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Norway, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Norway fully associates itself with the content of the statement delivered by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. That statement raises a number of issues that are of vital concern if the Afghan Government and international community are to succeed in their joint efforts towards peace, stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

We have asked for the floor because we believe that the need for Afghan ownership in the development and reconstruction process, and the need for the United Nations to be strengthened, with a particular view to coordinating efforts towards that goal, ought to be emphasized even more. We cannot succeed in Afghanistan unless the Afghan people perceive the path that they have taken ever since late 2001 as the path towards substantive and sustainable improvement of their lives. We cannot succeed unless the Afghan governmental institutions, nationally as well as locally, enjoy increased legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people.

Therefore, an overarching concern in all of our efforts towards development and reconstruction must be to ensure that they are coherent with Afghan priorities and plans, again, nationally as well as locally. We must all be willing to coordinate and to allow ourselves to be coordinated with that concern in mind.

I must underline the urgency of this issue. Some of us raised the need for better coordination here in New York a year ago, and it is indeed worrying that we are still concerned about inadequate coordination. That means that we still risk wasting our resources and are still losing time, time that we will not be able to make up for later. That is serious, because it undermines our efficiency, our credibility and our ability to reach our objectives. Coordination takes leadership, and we must bestow the mandate of such leadership upon the United Nations.

The United Nations must assume the role of leader and coordinator in making sure that we all contribute to the maximum extent towards strengthening Afghan legitimacy and ownership of the country's own development process. That must be accompanied by a continued endeavour towards Afghan capacity-building, so that the Afghan authorities enhance their expertise in formulating goals, plans and priorities. That must apply on the national, province and district levels alike. The Afghan people must be able to see the measures taken by their Government at various levels as unified, coherent and aimed at consistent goals.

If the United Nations should take on the task of strengthening its leadership role and coordination, it must be given the wherewithal to do so. The dedicated men and women who work for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan under the excellent leadership of Mr. Tom Koenigs must be given the authority and additional resources that they need. Our preference would be both to strengthen the Mission and to appoint a special envoy to ensure coordination in Kabul and between our capitals. Differing views on the question of a special envoy should not block our efforts

to provide the Mission with increased funding and manpower, both in Kabul and in the provinces throughout Afghanistan.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the delegation of Pakistan, I would like to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on Ghana's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Allow me to also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert for the successful French presidency last month.

I would like to welcome in particular the briefing provided to the Security Council by Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan. We convey our appreciation to Mr. Koenigs on his latest presentation to the Council and for his sincere and dedicated efforts as the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) during the past few years.

We have read the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/555). It provides a useful overview of the situation. Obviously, progress is reported in some areas, which should be welcomed. It is, however, a matter of concern that the overall trend in Afghanistan appears to be negative. A multitude of internal problems continue to strain and challenge the transition to durable peace and security. At the recent meeting of high-level representatives in New York, the challenges facing Afghanistan were well identified. They include governance, drugs, lack of development and insecurity.

Drugs are a grave and present danger to the entire effort in Afghanistan. A comprehensive and fair strategy to combat the problem of narcotics must break the link between drug money and the financing of terrorist and insurgent activity and criminality in Afghanistan.

Capacity-building of Afghan National Security institutions and their use for counter-insurgency, and decreased reliance on foreign forces would be a positive development. What is required are properly trained, equipped, paid and ethnically balanced professional national forces.

We also require capacity-building in the sectors of governance, rule of law and greater action against corruption. Also, despite improvement in several economic and social indicators, particularly in health and education, the pace of economic development and reconstruction remains slow and uneven, especially in the generation of gainful employment in the rural areas. The resources allocated for economic recovery and reconstruction are inadequate. There is also a perennial problem of non-fulfilment of commitments made to Afghanistan.

Let me say a few words regarding the security challenge facing Afghanistan. The report of the Secretary-General notes that at least 78 districts of Afghanistan are currently rated as extremely risky. There are large parts of Afghanistan that are ungoverned space or under parallel structures of insurgents, as noted by the Russian ambassador. These are the safe havens within Afghanistan. The report of the Secretary-General notes that, in addition to insurgent and terrorist activity, several other factors cause insecurity and violence, including factional fighting, criminal activity, warlords and drug barons. Therefore, in our analysis and response it is important to resist the temptation to externalize the security challenges faced within Afghanistan.

We must have a proper understanding of these complex security challenges. In Afghanistan, there is first and foremost the core of violence and conflict that emanates from terrorist groups, foreign militants such as Al-Qaida and a handful of militant Taliban who are not prepared to reconcile and give up the path of violence. These elements must be confronted directly, but our military strategy must avoid civilian casualties and prevent the further alienation of the population.

Secondly, there is the phenomenon of the rise of extremism, hence what has been called Talibanization. In this context, it should be well understood that the Taliban are part of Afghan society and have emerged from that society. Many can be won over. We therefore welcome President Karzai's offer of dialogue and reconciliation to the Taliban, and we regret the rejection by some Taliban leaders. We note Mr. Koenig's information that several Taliban commanders are prepared to talk. We hope that the process of reconciliation, including the peace jirga between Pakistan and Afghanistan, will be able to contribute to this objective of reconciliation.

Thirdly, besides these two elements, there is a common population of Afghanistan that, in certain areas and for diverse reasons, has gained sympathy for

the point of view of the Taliban and is susceptible to extremism. It is important for the international community and for the Government in Kabul to win over the hearts and minds of this population and to prevent their further alienation through the strategies that are followed on the military, political and economic fronts.

We have long believed that a winning strategy in Afghanistan would have to be a comprehensive strategy, one that combines military, political, economic and administrative measures. Such a strategy will have to build peace painstakingly, district by district, region by region, since circumstances in each area differ from each other.

Pakistan's cooperation with Afghanistan covers the entire spectrum of our relationship — military, intelligence, border control, trade, transit and development cooperation. Many of the successes against the Taliban, including some of those cited by my dear brother from Afghanistan, have been possible because of the intelligence, military and other cooperation extended by Pakistan bilaterally to Afghanistan or through the trilateral commission, including the United States and NATO.

Pakistan has a solemn responsibility not to allow support for the Taliban insurgency or Al-Qaida to flow across from our border regions. We have therefore deployed over 100,000 troops in this region, established 1,000 border posts, lost over 1,000 military personnel — more than any other country in this war against terror — and conducted over 120 military operations, some of which are ongoing as we speak. We believe that halting cross-border activity is a joint responsibility of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the coalition forces who are present across the border.

In this context, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had reached an agreement to close down four Afghan refugee camps that are close to the border, since these camps served as a source for the flow of cross-border militants. It is somewhat disturbing to see the account in the report of the Secretary-General with regard to the closure of the Jalozai camp, which we believe has been misrepresented in the report, as have certain other aspects of the current situation.

The closure of those four camps is being delayed because of inexplicable reluctance, including on the part of United Nations agencies, to facilitate the return of refugees. We expect the United Nations and the international community to assist in the repatriation of those Afghan refugees. They should not try our hospitality or our patience, since we also face the brunt of allegations of cross-border activities from those camps. Unfortunately, even the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has on occasion displayed a certain lack of political sensitivity and lack of impartiality in its reports and its actions.

In conclusion, let me say that there are no two countries that are as close as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our peoples have struggled together against heavy odds and insuperable enemies. Both countries need one another. Our peace jirga will address the common challenges we face in terrorism and extremism. But both countries must be cautious about the machinations of those outsiders who wish to create mistrust and mischief between us.

Pakistan wants to see Afghanistan emerge as a strong, united and cohesive nation that is at peace within and without. We have a vision for Pakistan and for the region. We want to see Pakistan develop as a hub of economic activity linking South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia through trade, energy and communications corridors. We cannot play that role without a partnership with Afghanistan. We therefore welcome Afghanistan's membership in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). As common members of both SAARC and the Economic Cooperation Organization, which spans Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan can hope to play the role of a land bridge between those vast regions.

As President Musharraf stated at the peace jirga in Kabul,

> "Pakistan desires peace, friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan based on mutual respect, sovereign equality, territorial integrity and independence".

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Koenigs: Let me make four very brief comments.

First of all, I would like to thank the Security Council for the continued broad support that the United

Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and its entire staff has received from it, for we depend on its ongoing support. At the moment, UNAMA faces not only the usual challenges of a post-conflict mission but also a burgeoning conflict in the south of the country. We therefore have both peacekeeping and peacemaking challenges ahead.

Secondly, I appreciate that the priorities have been clear in all the meetings held in the past month: first, security and security sector reform; secondly, governance; thirdly, counter-narcotics efforts; and, fourthly, regional cooperation. That came through in all the comments made today. I would like to mention that, because it is vital to security, governance might be the most important and challenging of all. Afghan-owned security must be achieved, but counter-narcotics efforts, capacity development and regional cooperation are also necessary.

Thirdly, counter-insurgency can only be successful if it increases the legitimacy of the Government of Afghanistan. All our efforts in the areas of governance, counternarcotics, security and regional cooperation must therefore focus on the overarching importance of the legitimacy of the legally elected Government. We must therefore win hearts and minds not only for ourselves, but also for the Afghan Government. We have to win the legitimacy of the Afghan Government, because only an Afghan Government that is legitimate, and perceived as such, will be able to finally overcome the challenges posed by the insurgency.

Fourthly, and lastly, in my view, the efforts of Afghanistan and the international community should, and can be, an integral peacemaking factor for the whole region, just as the region can, and must be, a peacemaking factor for Afghanistan. On the other hand, the conflicts and instability in the region could, but must not be, a disintegrating factor for Afghanistan and our efforts.

The President: I thank Mr. Koenigs for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.